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Femme Fatales

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The Laughing Ladies of Horror, Fantasy & Science Fiction

MARCH 2008

A belated Merry Christmas. During the past few months, I've been driven to distraction. It seems our great nation is ailing with a chronic case of political comorbidity. I mean, it's out of control. Valentine's Day may be protested into extinction because the "holistic" alludes to a saint (i.e. religion). So February 14th may be newly christened as "Special Someone Day." I'm not kidding. The celebration of Halloween has been excised from some schools because of its theological ties (i.e. the veil of All Souls' Day). And the omens, librettas, fanzines—whatever—are so adding everything from Mark Twain to Looney Tunes. George Orwell was right, we're rewriting history; the past will resemble present trends. One of the consequences, the struggles of women and men—both of us—has been threatened. It's eventually erased because we've pretified that the helms—communicated through the bigoted "language" of our opinions—never existed.

My reaction to PG? Two words: *Maria*. Maria! He's about as subtle as a Kerry Hill routine, and he's mired in the same misogyny as a PGPRY's movie and has been so politically correct we an AMOS 'N' ANDY ruin! But he's a breath of fresh air. I mean, the guy is almost a rebel because he thumbs his nose at social "safety nets." Situations that may be gauged as unbridled sexism—yourself and women involuntarily turned-on by technology—may amuse some and be a problem to others. But if we embrace "political correctness" and pretend these problems never exist, it's likely they'll never be resolved. Dan Sussler's spirit is an entire year researching Maria, whose popularity is undeniably global.

Hey, check out the newscasts next month for our first double-issue. It's a 30s/90s retro and it rocks, with Laura Schif's personal interview with Bette Page, Danny Seap's dialogue with Russ Meyer, the director's cut of *KISS ME DEADLY*, etc., etc. And we check back into *HORROR HOTELS*.

Well, time for Bill George and me to check into Nichi Bai Kai. Let the sake and Dai Pops flow! Jennifer Huse



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Publisher: Frederick S. Clarke **Editor:** Bill George **Barreiras:** Los Angeles/Laura Schiff **New York:** Don Scoppone **Berlin:** Tim Gerners
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Production: Joseph Kishida **Business Manager:** Collette Giese Clarke

© 2005 Blackwell Publishing Ltd, *Journal of Internal Medicine* 258: 519–529

© 2005 Blackwell Publishing Ltd *Journal of Internal Medicine* 258: 299–306

[illegible]

FORNAT FATALITIES (1982-1994) a published monthly 175MM x 250MM 8, 640MM, 344-596A Different Offices: 1982 Published date: Baltimore MD 21201 35-460-1447 Second class postage paid at Baltimore, MD 21201 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to FORNAT FATALITIES P.O. Box 744 Oak Park, IL 60301
Subscription: \$40 (Foreign & Canada: \$75) Single copies when purchased from publisher: 10 ForNAT FATALITIES (in the U.S.)
Return News Distribution, 200 W. 50th St. New York, NY 10013 212-544-1544 Subscribers of articles and updates are encouraged to send us
Comments, questions, suggestions, correspondence 175MM x 250MM 8, 640MM 344-596A (in a separate envelope) PRINTED IN USA

Random House Distributors, Ltd. 9, 10 & 11, New York, N.Y. 10017 (212) 512-2000. www.randomhouse.com or www.randomhouse.co.uk for more information. **PRINTED IN USA**

F A T A L E

By LAURA SCHIFF

Happy New Year! So what do *STAR TREK: A CARMINAL OF SOULS* remake and *ELLEN*'s on-screen lesbian love have in common? Listen up...

Sara Menall makes her feature film debut in *Pure But Loud Productions*' *PLAN B*, the \$300,000 "title movie that could." The actress was previously cast as Ensign Carson in *Starship Down*, a fourth season episode of *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* (remember? A fierce battle with the Jem'Hadar left the USS Defiant trapped in the volatile atmosphere of a distant planet). "I still, to this day, have no idea what my lines meant," admits Menall. "It was all techno babble, but I got more fan mail from that episode than anything I've ever done."

Hailed as "the BIG CHILL of the '90s," *PLAN B* earned a limited theatrical release in art house venues. Directed by UCLA film school graduate Gary Lewis, the film was produced by Lewis, his wife & former literary agent Luke Baines Lewis and saved-winning "short film" producer Nancy Joslin. "Making *PLAN B* was a phenomenal experience," enthuses Menall at the post-screening party. "When I read the script, I called my agent and said, 'This is the role of a lifetime.'" Menall plays Gina, a successful business woman whose lack of self-confidence prompts her to reinvent a personality that's more appealing to her boyfriend's du jour. "She really gives up on men completely and goes gay," Menall shrugs. "In the end, she realizes that she can only be herself."

Advertising for Wes Craven's *CARNIVAL OF SOULS* remake, Menall performed a sequence that indicates a significant deviation from the 1982 original. "They had me do three scenes from the movie, in which I'm seeing my dead father who had drowned with me. In one scene, I was washing my face, and I look up in the mirror and there's a ghost behind me. I had to scream a lot. They auditioned people for a long time, and they ended up casting Bobbie Phillips [*SHOWGIRLS*] as the lead [played by Candace Hilligoss in the '82 precursor]."

● Stanford graduate Lisa Darr plays Clara, Menall's older sister, in *PLAN B*; the character is a nurturing motherly woman who, despite Heloisean efforts, cannot get pregnant. "The producers have worked so hard to put this wonderful little film together," says Darr. "I'm really thrilled about it." So-far addicts may recall Darr from a '92 episode of *QUANTUM LEAP* titled "The Curse of Patsy-Motley." But it's likely that mainstream America is more familiar with Darr as Ellen DeGeneres' first official girlfriend, "Lisette Manning," on ABC's sitcom, *ELLEN*. Darr's recurrent character was introduced on the October 29, '97 episode; the much-ballyhooed relationship subsequently developed each week through November.

"I actually really love playing a lesbian," says Darr. "So much of my career has been comprised of playing what I call the chick of the



Cost as co-5 & action-related heroine, Athena Massey (*STAR TREK: VOYAGER*) portrays a more down-to-earth Elizabeth Taylor in *JAMES DEAN-RADE WITH DESTINY*.

week! It's like I'm in the Witness Protection Program. I move around to different towns and I keep dating different guys, and we break up in 22 minutes and I'm just kind of trim on my arm! But with *ELLEN*, it's a role that's got some meat to it. This is more of an equal relationship—I'm not just there to give up a guy's ego. *ELLEN* is so vulnerable and going and real—not just as a person, but as a character—so this is more of a real relationship than anything I've done before." Speaking of meat, Darr is on the lookout for a role she can really sink her teeth into. "My true dream part is to play a vampire. I'm a big fan of the whole genre. I think vampires are so sexy and fascinating. I love the mythology of it combined with the romance. I'm a big Anne Rice fan. I did a TV series called *PROFIT*, with Adrian Pasdar, who was in my favorite vampire movie, *NEAR DARK*. He was shocked when I told him how much I loved that movie!"

It's no secret that Michelle Pfeiffer is another genre aficionado. Orson, she played the curvaceous Catwoman in *BATMAN RETURNS* as well as a woman who befriends Jack Nicholson's lycanthrope in *WOLF*. After a splash of such ho-

lumn films like *UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL* and *A THOUSAND ACRES*, it now seems that Pfeiffer may be on the lookout for a classic ghost story. Says producer/director Stuart Gordon (*THE ANIMATOR*, *MONEY*, *I SHREK THE KIDS*), "I recently did an interview on a project that was going to be a new version of *Henry James' Turn of the Screw*. Supposedly, Michelle Pfeiffer was attached to do it, which sounded great, but nothing ever came of it." Don't get us hope, Michelle!

● Athena Massey (5'7") has announced the sequel to *NOT OF THIS EARTH* will officially be christened *STAR PORTAL*. "I'm an alien whose space ship has crash-landed on earth. I'm taking blood samples of people and transmitting them back to my home planet in the hopes of saving my people from a blood plague." Both *STAR PORTAL* and Massey's actor, *TERMINATION MAN*, will debut on Roger Corman's home video label, Concord/New Horizons. Massey describes her role in the latter film as "a secret agent who, working alongside Steve Railsback, pursues a villain who can pollute the world with a toxic gas." The actress is currently "looking for a script that really excites me. A lot of the scripts I've been getting are all basically the same. I'm trying to hold out for something bigger and better."

● Actress/linger Jennifer Huss recently played *BLOOD AND HONOR*, a Civil War saga starring Michelle Bauer (4'2). Director Don Farmer (*RED LIPS*, *VAMPIRE CROP*) and Bauer (*EVIL*, *TOORS*) approved the project to abandon their ties with horror films and circumvent stereotypes. "I wore old Southern belle dresses, and we filmed at the mansion of Tennessee Senator Don Wright," says Huss. "It looks like a plantation. The inside was authentic 1800s. My character, Mrs. Camille Todd, tries to swallow this nice woman—played by Michelle—out of her money by claiming that the funds will support the local parish. The last thing about doing this movie was working with Michelle Bauer. She and I just clicked it up on the set, joke after joke. I don't remember ever working with a more delightful actress. She has so much talent—she's a consummate actress—and we had so much fun. She's just an incredible woman!" Huss is keeping her next project under wraps: "There's a lot of stuff in the works, but I've been sworn to secrecy. Ask me in 5 or 6 weeks. I posted for a FF special to link up with this movie. *Love sealed!*"

● A beauty in her film (*AUSTIN POWERS*, *DARK GODESS*) and TV appearances (*BAYWATCH*), Barbara Moore is replacing Heather Elizabeth Parkhurst (Rik) as London Night's "live action" embodiment of their comic book heroine, *Storm*. Guro.

● A FF 87 photo of Carolyn Renee Smith, embodying the equally voluptuous *Vampirella*, has drawn an avalanche of mail. Address your queries directly to Ms. Smith via her web site: <http://www.fox.com/~carolynrenee000>

● Dig the paranormal and UFO? Check-out the UPN series, *STRANGE UNIVERSE*. Julie Strain (3'2) is hosting her own segment on the

show, which is appropriately titled *Strain's Universe*. "I'm also a judge for the series' *Strangest Person in America* contest," explains the B-movie diva. "You can win a trip to Los Angeles, and a very strange trip that will be! If you have a strange talent, strange ability, strange idea, strange invention, if you live in a strange world—like me—you can send either a video or a 50-word statement with a picture to *Strange Universe*, 4672 Topanga Canyon Blvd., Suite 416, Woodland Hills, CA 91364. The show is doing so well that we beat David Letterman's ratings in New York!"

The actress just completed *GUNS OF EL CHUPACABRA*, directed by Dan Jackson (*HELL COMES TO FROSTOWN*). Cost as a queen of mean who faces off with a certain mythos (specifically, a cow-killing creature), Strain notes, "So many people believe in the existence of El Chupacabra that the official handbook for the U.S. Marines actually warns of a blood-sucking, flesh-eating Mexican beast! Julie Luner Strain played the movie's monster. I accidentally hit her in the head with my sword and drew blood. I felt so bad!" Kevin Gassman, publisher of *Heavy Metal* magazine and Strain's real-life spouse, appears in the movie as King Alameda.

Last November, Strain supported gangsta rapper Snoop Doggy Dogg in *CLEANERS*. "I play a classy woman with a pen as who's trying to get the money for a sex change operation. There's no nudity or sex, but I'm an operation city of being a real chick!" During the summer of '91, Strain wrapped *BLOODTHIRSTY*, which she describes as "a great little vampire movie directed by Jeff Froy. I'm the 'secret wife' and the narrator as well." The film reunited Strain with erotic thriller vet Monique Parent: the couple previously performed a very graphic but sensual woman/woman scene in *DARK SECRETS*, a sizzler that broadcast "misanthropic" S&M (video censors were bonded with black leather collars).

■ Monique Parent pays her *BLOODTHIRSTY* bombshell as "a woman named Whitney who, on the surface, seems very together. She owns an art gallery. She's very cool in a '40s, Lauren Bacall kind of way. But you come to find out she used to be a heroin addict and was suicidal. The way she overcame these addictions was she got into drinking blood. Blood is her new addiction. The movie starts out with her interviewing a potential roommate (actress Leslie Darro, 32) who, in the best of situations, would also be her blood donor. A power struggle develops between them." Parent continues in the vampire "venom" with her subsequent film, a "very offbeat, very aware variation of *Dracula* that's directed by Anthony Kene. I play a 'vampire groupie'."

■ Brigitte Nielsen (34) stars in director Todd McElfeely's romantic comedy, *SHE'S TOO TALL*. Says associate producer Tom Laplante, "Brigitte creates her own fashions. An ex-



Uma Thurman and Ralph Fiennes as *THE AVENGERS*, a movie spin-off of the British TV series (81-85). Wu Thurman prove equally appealing as *Diane Figg*?

husband, played by George Hamilton, tries to run in Brigitte's new line of clothes. Gary Feldman, cost as a down and out "out 'n' new guy" comes to her rescue and, of course, they fall in love."

■ Movie spin-offs of classic TV series sometimes lapse into commercial turn-outs: sample the waning act, performed at your local box office, by last year's *LEAVE IT TO BEAVER*. But it appears *THE AVENGERS* movie is hybridizing the eccentricity and panache that fueled the British series' longevity (1961-69). And let's remember the import was sometimes too sexually eccentric for domestic consumption: one fatalistic episode, *A Touch of Brinkstone*, provoked the wrath of U.S. censors. The title character, a blonde named Ernie Peet (introduced in the 4th season) and dipper John Steed, were deftly played by Olivia Rigg and Patrick Macnee. The big screen incarnation offers Uma Thurman and Ralph Fiennes as heirs to the roles: if they can approximate the chemistry of their predecessors, the movie should be a sleeper hit. Supporting cast includes Sean Connery and Ewan Adams (*WOLF*). Jeremiah Chechik directs Don MacPerson's screenplay.

■ David Campbell, Innovation Publishing temp, has written comic book tie-ins to movies and TV series, including *LOST IN SPACE*, *DARK SHADOWS*, and *QUANTUM LEAP*. "If it wasn't for the being so hard-headed and mean," he says, "the rights to *LOST IN SPACE* never would have been picked up, and there wouldn't be a *LOST IN SPACE* movie on the way now." Currently off-

ering Glass House Graphics, the studio that produces the *Ghost* and *Angel* Heel among others, Campbell is negotiating the rights for artist Rick Veitch to render popular, genre-related actresses into comic book heroines. "Right now we're working out deals with Chase Masters on *[BET]*, who plays Leela on *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE*, and Lereza McCombs *[BET]*," says Campbell. Another actress "whose *Femme Fatales* readers are very familiar with" is also considering the project but, says Campbell, "it's still too premature for me to give you any more information on the involved parties or their comic book characters. At this point, anything I say today could be changed by tomorrow. As soon as I have something definite, I'll give FF the full scoop." Tap into the GHD web site (www.ghd.com/ff) for full-color pics of Veitch's heroines. My recommendations? His Jane Fonda/Berberis is a great screen asset.

Submits Send seems have joined the expansive cast of Exclusive Premier's limited edition, collector dolls." The company's track record includes a likeness of Elizabeth Montgomery as *BEWITCHED*'s "Samantha Stephens" (accessible only through the New York-based FAD Schwarz), and a plastic impression of Catherine Bach's "Daisy Duke" from *THE DUKES OF HAZZARD*. A few weeks ago, Exclusive marketed a series of six *BADLYN* dolls, Ambassador G. Ker, Capt

John Sheridan, Lennox, Marcus Cole and Vir. This month, the company is premiering dolls from the first (1953) and latest submissions (1997) of 007's film legacy. *THE DOCTOR* NO doll series includes bikini-clad Honey Ryder, the

continued on page 60

DEEP SPACE 9 of the girl turns ghost in *SCREAMING THEY COME BACK... FOR MORE*, will Chase Masters (FF sig) also turn into a comic book?



Famke Janssen

DEEP RISING

SINKING TO NEW HEIGHTS AS A "KLUTZY" FEMME FATALE, THE FORMER 007 TEMPTRESS DEEP-SIXES SEA MONSTERS.

By DOUGLAS EBY

Her performance as GOLDENEYE's Xenia Onatopp elevated her to #15 status in *FF*'s "50 Sexiest Bond Women" survey (issue 6.8). But, this year, Famke Janssen had a significantly different fish to fry. Cast in *DEEP RISING*, she plays one of the few survivors left



DEEP RISING (p.) Janssen bats herself as fish food in "a flooding chamber of horrors." L. Born in Holland, she played an L.A. sexbabe in *CITY OF INDUSTRY*

aboard a luxury liner after the vessel was assaulted by a swarm of subaquatic critters. Not unlike her "sisters" this issue, N'bushe Wright and Dina Meyer, the actress—abducted by the film's director, Steve Sommers—portrayed her femme fatale as "feminine, sexy, tough and as smart and strong as any of the guys. She's the kind of character who's nice

to play and, even if she wasn't written like that, I'd always try to bring some of those elements to the character. But that's definitely what we were going after, because there's a lot of guys in the movie, it's all guys and me. So it was very important that I wasn't going to be like the 'poor pathetic female' running around after all of them, needing to be

protected by them. But I also have a distaste for these film females who miraculously, and all of a sudden, become superhuman. I just wanted to make sure there was a good balance. You still want to keep the characters you play feminine but, at the same time, you want to give them strength and intelligence."

Though her heroine, Tril-

lian, is less vulnerable to hysterical outbursts than the average genre heroine, Janssen stresses the character is "nothing" like the predatory assassin she played opposite 007. "Trillian is softer. GOLDENEYE's Xenia wasn't a real character—there's a lot of qualities I didn't have to give her, because it was sort of a fantasy part, a cartoon character. But my *DEEP RISING* character is realistic so that's why, at times, I had to make her react with fright to situations where a normal human would be genuinely unnerved. Xenia, however, didn't really have those fears. And once you get into that realm of fantasy, it's really fun to play someone like Xenia just because there's no limitations of what you can do as an actor—there's no price that is too far to go. Of course, when you start playing the realistic characters, all of a sudden you have restrictions you have to work within. I like freedom, personally."

Sommers insists Janssen "is like the girl-next-door, she's klutzy and fun, and really sweet." Janssen laughs at the description: "I'm nothing like the girl-next-door in *GOLDENEYE*, am I? But in my everyday life, I



Directed by horror writer Clive Barker (3), Janssen played "a tormented soul" in *LOVE OF BLANCKHO* (3). Though Barker was great to work with," she "has problems with that movie and my character." Nevertheless, "the producers of *GOLDENYE* saw the tapes. Based on that footage, they saw me to London for a screen test."

am klutzy: I'm bruised from just walking around! Getting out of bed, I bang into things. So those were the qualities I brought to Trifon. I thought that would be fun, and I hadn't done it. But that's very much part of me. I'm not as sophisticated and suave as Xenia was."

Preferring to further expand her acting abilities, Janssen would gladly swap roles as Bond girl and monster exterminator for an opportunity to play Anna Karenina: "That is definitely a drive. I think there's a real lack of good female characters in film today. You do the best with what you have, and you try to bring certain qualities to the different characters that you play. But, at some point, I really want to play a very complicated character that I haven't been able to play."

"I played Katie O'Conner, in a movie I just finished for director Ted Demme [about-

ing title: *NOOSE!* We shot it in Boston, and Katie's supposed to be from a really poor part of that city called Charlestown. They're all Irish-Americans and there's a lot of violence, petty theft and car stealing going on, and my character is very torn. I think because she's born into this world, and there's no way out, she tries to numb herself with a lot of alcohol and drugs and things. She's in a lot of pain, but she's fun too. And a little crazy character, which I find appealing." Janssen also recently wrapped *GINGERBREAD MAN*. "I got to play this Southern drunk woman. I like to play characters that are not as simple."

I note that KENA has been proclaimed a role model for adolescent females. Admitting that she's never seen the show, Janssen speculates *The Warrior Princess* "will project the kind of woman who takes



charge, and that's probably what women like about her. I play characters that weren't completely defined when they were written, and I'm trying to make the best out of them. But I hope to get to a point where I get to play this character who is already so well-written, and then—on top of that—I can add to it. But it's difficult because still the majority of

writers are males, and when it comes to female characters, they're always at a loss a little bit."

Janssen and Sommers collaboratively, she notes, "worked really hard to make sure my *DEEP RISING* character was not just an action hero who happens to be female. We've seen it in movies before, and we wanted to make her much more



DEEP RISING partners in crime: Janssen's "glamorous jewel thief" and Tim Williams' very straggler fight hybridized creatures such as Vampire squid.



DEEP RISING Janssen, Williams (l) and Wes Studi rest in glamorous sea creature. "My character is as smart and strong as any of the guys," gloats Janssen.

"There's a lack of good female characters in film. You do the best with what you have. I have a distaste for scripts about women who abruptly turn superhuman."

was kind of a challenge. Nobody thought I had that quality, other than the people in my private life. And there's the challenge of the creature that you can't see on the set, because its only exists—at this stage—only as a special effects concept. But you've got to make it real. And there's other challenges that come with everyday filmmaking. The part was also physically demanding, requiring the actress to submerge underwater and cruise on a jetski.

Unlike her more notorious screen incarnation, Janssen notes that "Trillian wasn't as good with all the weapons as Xenia. For Xenia, I really trained and took a fake AK-47 home with me. I practiced loading it and all that kind of stuff, so I was really familiar with it. In this case, I didn't do anything so that by the time I was on screen with this thing, I was as scared of it as I was supposed to be. I don't like guns. I wonder, sometimes, if it's not even more dangerous to get too familiar with them."

DEEP RISING: "Our creature's going to make **LITTLE NERDMARKY**'s sea witch look like an appetizer," vows Oscar-winning designer Rob Bottin (w/ Carlos Huante).



human and more feminine, as well as strong when it's time to be strong. And the best thing that Steve did for the audience was bring a sense of humor to it, and he invited everyone else to do the same. You have to do that in those kinds of movies, they're sort of unrealistic in themselves, I mean, how often does one encounter a gigantic octopus in life?"

The cast battled monsters that would not be visibly manifested until months later in post-production. But Janssen's been there, done that on the set of **LORD OF ILLUSIONS** (1995): "You just have to rely on your director to say what you do, or 'Go bigger' because the thing's really scary. And it's hard because you always think, 'Wait a minute. The audience needs to respond,

not me. If I respond that much, there's nothing left for the audience to do. So that's always a struggle, and you never know whether you succeeded until it's on the screen and you see the whole thing put together." I asked if she was content with her work in **LORD OF ILLUSIONS**. "I'm rarely satisfied with anything I do," the actress shrugs. "I have problems with that movie, and with my character in the movie."

Her **DEEP RISING** protagonist, who's a jewel thief, afforded Janssen more flexibility than her previous genre film: "I always try something new for every character I play. I did make Trillian a little more klutzy, a girl-next-door type of thing. It's not the way I've been seen before, so that

Born in Holland, fluent in four languages, Janssen is preoccupied with the U.S. film industry—if you don't count her casting in a recent British production: "I used different dialects in it. I'd love to shoot films in Europe, actually. I've just been pursuing my American acting career for the last couple of years. Still, everyday I wake up and I can't believe the last two years of my life because I've been able to play a woman from the South, a woman from Boston's Charlestown, an L.A. local in **CITY OF INDUSTRY**. I'm European, and I think every actress in America is dying to play these different characters with different dialects."

Interested in other aspects of film, Janssen has written a script but hasn't negotiated its sale. She's also directed a short film, but prefers that her behind-the-scenes activity "be reserved for the future. It's just that, at the moment, I'm so busy acting that it's difficult to combine anything and I kind of want to focus on one thing right now."



Though DEEP FISHING is ostensibly a monster/sai-fi saga, Janssen is elated that Trillian is "probably the most light-hearted character I've ever played. I've made all my other characters deeper, more complicated, and I think this was really nice because, personally, I'm not that light-hearted. I think you learn something from every single character, and I kind of learned that from her. Sometimes it's just important to have fun, and not worry about everything. That's a lesson we all know, it's just harder to apply to your own life sometimes." □

GOLDENYE A former supermodel, Janssen was cast as 30's runaway, Xosha Royston (it's a "She's one sick lady"). **#1** Rehearsing with Pierce Brosnan & director Martin Campbell.



BUGGED BY

BY DAN PERSONS

In Paul Verhoeven's *STARSHIP TROOPERS*, Dina Meyer plays Dizzy Flores, the young, gang-bro cap trooper who battles giant warrior bugs, romances hero Johnny Rico (Casper Van Dien) between planet-drops, and gives her all for the Earth Alliance. Not a surprising role for an actress who initially made her mark as a down-on-her-luck bodyguard in *JOHNNY MNEMONIC* and promptly moved on to portray a beehemoth's battle mate in *DRAGONHEART*. What is surprising, though, is that Dizzy is not a squeeze, but only a temporary bed mate until he can get back to his true love, Carmen Ibanez (Denise Richards). That's right. In *STARSHIP TROOPERS*, Dina Meyer gets treated as sleepy seconds. All together now, kids: Johnny, you fool!

But this doesn't faze Ms. Meyer at all. "It's one of those love triangle things where Johnny's in love with Carmen, and I'm in love with Johnny," she says. "Carmen is very independent—that is my take on her character. I haven't seen the movie yet, so I don't know how the movie's interpreted Carmen. I was initially supposed to go out for that part, and I just found Dizzy to be a little bit more interesting...I just related more with the role of Dizzy."

"I found Carmen to be just sort of the babe of the movie; she's the one that Johnny—the lead guy, the hero—is in love with, but then she goes off and just decides that she



STARSHIP TROOPERS T. One of the film's familiar "still images" brooches MPAA territory: Meyer & Casper Van Dien assist Michael Ironside, who lost his legs to bugs bugs. B. Meyer's accolades avenge her death by blessing her assistant.



Warship Trooper

LEAD BABE ROLE, MS. DINA MEYER OPTED TO BE ONE O' THE GUYS.

wants to be a pilot. She wants to go *career*. It's 'Sorry, Johnny, that doesn't leave room for us'—you know, sends him a Dear John letter and 'see ya' and has a little relationship with Patrick (Muldoon's) character, Zander. I don't know, I just felt there was more to the role of Dixie, which I find more intriguing to play and a little more challenging than just being the beautiful girl that everyone loves."

Daring to go out for the role that is traditionally held in reserve for the likes of a Jennie Garth, Meyer was fortunate enough to encounter a director who casts against Hollywood's provincial editors. "When I went in finally and read for Paul," recounted Meyer, "I think he was expecting me to read for Carmen. I said, 'If you don't mind, I think I'm more Dixie than Carmen.' And I thought Dixie maybe had to be a little shorter, a little frumpier, a little uglier. I kind of read Carmen to be the babe of the movie, and I read Dixie to be the underdog/not-so-pretty/more-athletic/more-a-guy's-best-friend. You know, every guy's best friend, but someone that maybe a guy would not sleep with. That's how I got it initially, and Paul said, 'No... no, that's not necessarily so.' I found she was sexy, and she did have sex appeal, and she was athletic and there are some guys that I think might like her more than Carmen."

So who, in Meyer's view, is Dixie Flores? "Well, for the most part, she's in love with Johnny, and she's... I don't want to say she's a jock, and I don't want to say

"It's the first time that I handled such a large rifle. It's very cool, it's a very powerful object. I got like, I feel like a man today...I have a gigantic, powerful weapon."



Director Paul Verhoeven (l.) & his TV supervisor Paul Tipton (center) rebaste Meyer's makeup in the scene in the prelude to her violent demise

she's just a tough girl, because she's very feminine at times and I think she's very sexy at times. But she can also hold her own. She's a fighter, a soldier, but I think she's also very feminine. She's not just like this masculine chick. It was funny; when I was reading the script, and I was telling

some friends about the character, they were saying, 'Oh, like the Latin girl from ALIENS.' You know, with the big rifle and the muscles? She's not like that at all, she's really not. She's very much a woman but, in the future, those women are a little bit tougher than today—although the women

of the nineties are pretty tough.

"It's good, because there's a little bit of cattiness that I think occurs in school in the beginning, in the first act, and then when Carmen goes off to become a pilot and I join the Mobile Infantry with Johnny. We're all joining together in boot camp, and then our relationship grows. Oh, actually before we even go to boot camp—I'm also quarterback of our pseudo-football/jumphall team and then there's also the prom, where I got to be a pretty girl in a dress just like everybody else. And then we get to go to boot camp, where I really get to kick some ass and then, finally, the war. Whereas Carmen didn't have to get as dirty, you know? I was really in the mud, which I think is more fun—especially being a girl. It's sort of like unexpected."

Though it may look like fun on the screen, the real-life logistics of training turned out to be slightly more grueling, consisting of both day and night shoots in such inhospitable environs as Hell's Half Acre in Wyoming and South Dakota's Badlands; then there were weeks at the production's futuristic boot camp in Long Beach, California. Captain that Verhoeven's venue hardly translated as recreation on a badminton court, Meyer steeled herself for the experience as best she could. "I was working out for months before. I was cast in this movie in October '95," and we didn't start filming until April. I had my time to work out: two and a half hours a day, five times a

week.

"The weather in South Dakota and in Long Beach—when we were shooting in July and August, running around with the extra forty pounds of battle gear—it was just very physically demanding. More physically demanding than any other role I've ever done. Even working out two and a half hours a day, five days a week, doesn't get you in shape for working under a 104 degree sun that's beating down on you on a black tarmac. Plus, you're wearing all this wardrobe that doesn't breathe, plus the rubber gear, plus your thirty

"Paul Verhoeven had the whole [love scene] story-boarded. But it's still a little awkward when you're like, 'Push here, kiss him here—oh shit!—kiss him there!'"



Verhoeven advises Meyer on reacting to a "near attack" from an operative in act II. The same scene, applied to film, with Meyer entered—from behind—by Phil Tippett's CGI attacker. L. Meyer's G.I. Jane stores the bug's fortress.



pound weapon, and a helmet, and a neoprene collar). We were shooting all day once and it was, I think, 110 degrees outside, and we're wearing these rubber vests and shooting these bugs and getting sunburned and just trying to drink as much Gatorade as we could. It got to the point where Seth [Gilliam—the film's Sugar Watkins] and Casper and I were just punch drunk by the end of the day. I don't know what we were laughing at: we were doing impersonations of the people we were working with, and laughing and screaming and just not knowing what we was up."

Not that Verhoeven, prior to the shoot, didn't try to prepare his cast for the con-



ditions under which they would be working. The results, according to Meyer, were mixed: "Paul wanted us to have two weeks of 'group camp training' before we actually started filming, just to get a feel of the military and get acclimated to the altitude and running around with these thirty pound weapons and forty

pound outfits that we were wearing. So we did two weeks of boot camp. The first night we camped out, and we were setting up our tents which were two rain ponchos tied together. It was a little pup tent, basically, that had two people per tent. That night, we had an unexpected snowstorm, where we were buried in

about a foot and a half of snow. And we only had spring sleeping bags. Well, that was enough for me [laughs]. I said, 'Uhhhhh... I'll see ya in the morning. I'll be here to train, but I'm not sleeping out here any longer. I've had enough misery, I can come back and reflect on this experience. That's enough!'

"Casper, you know, held out for two weeks. He was showering with freezing water. I don't know how he [pauses]—well, I do know how he did it: he's just a nut bar. But I think he was more worried about what people would think of him if he chickened out. But, basically, it wasn't a matter of chickening out for me, it was just I didn't want to be sick before filming. It was physically demanding enough without being sick, and I said, 'You know what? I'm gonna sleep in a hotel, I'm gonna Jacuzzi, I'm gonna hot tub, I'm gonna sauna, I'm gonna do all that stuff at night after a really good workout during the day—and there's nothing wrong with that.' Get trained during the day, there's no sense sleeping on blocks and freezing my butt off. There's serious risk of getting sick."

Of course, risks didn't vanish once the cameras started rolling and sometimes they'd be embodied by the nearest actor. Said Meyer, "This was the first time, really, that I was handling such a large rifle, equipped with a shotgun as well. It's very cool, I like it—it's the closest that I could feel like a man, I guess. It's a very powerful object. I get, like, *I feel like a man, today—I have this gigantic, powerful weapon.*"

"The biggest problem for me—as well as, I'm sure, a few other actors—was the distance between the actors when we were shooting with our machine guns and our M16A rifles. You know, Paul wanted to get a big line-up and have as many actors in-frame as one time, but the fire from the rifles would wind up hitting you. Even



Meyer survived Keira Reene as JOHNEY MADERONG. Budgeted at \$68 million, the film's workable gross was only \$52.4 million. USA Today titled the film as "the latest BLADE RUNNER knockoff." *Gals on Film* said "it's neither philosophical enough (think STARS WARS), nor weird enough (think BLADE RUNNER)." *—*

though we were shooting blanks, there's still like a foot and a half of explosion that shoots out in front, and about a foot out sideways. So if anybody is in that range of your gun, next to your muzzle, they're going to get burned. It's just like a little spark, it's not really that painful. But there were people who got shot in the face and in the ear. I had a bunch of red, little bleeding marks on my arm during one of the bottle scenes—somebody got too close to me. That was the worst part of it all."

Keep in mind that all these pyrotechnics were being expended on creatures who were virtual phantoms on-set, being no more than digitally-generated images that dwell in the confines of Phil Tippett's Northern California CGI systems. No big deal for Meyer who, after all, had to play off a CG dragon, voiced by Sean Connery, in DRAGONHEART: "I am getting used to working op-

posed nothing," the actress smiled. "The reactions are obviously a little bit different, because now I'm working opposite the enemy. In DRAGONHEART, Draco [the dragon] wasn't an enemy, so that was the only thing that was really different. As far as everything else goes, there's nothing there, and you're just acting."

"Paul would let us know how close the bugs were, or where they were coming up from—you know, out yonder. I think the hardest part of working with these things was when they were getting really close enough to us to shoot. They stepped in a funny way—Paul would have to say, 'Okay, you would take three steps, and you'd go YoA! And three steps closer... and three steps closer! And we were backing up at the same time. And, obviously, when the camera was rolling there was nothing there, but we were all pretty much

choreographed. It was almost like a dance number."

The waltz didn't stop there, although Meyer definitely didn't require a gun for her other big dance number. "As far as the intimate scenes," said the actress, "—the love scenes, that kind of stuff, it's all choreographed. You have to get the camera angles right and you have to kiss when they say 'Kiss,' and touch and spin and pull back and, you know, breathe him. Those scenes are really so not intimate. You would think like, 'Okay the actors, are they really getting into it?' ... Does the director just say 'Okay, go at it, guys. We'll get the part that we like?'"

It's not like that at all. Everything is choreographed.

"I spoke with Paul about this, because I was a little bit nervous about this being my first, real, big, on-screen love scene. Paul had the whole thing story-boarded,

every shot, every angle. It made things a little easier, but it's still a little awkward when you're like, 'Okay wait, I push him down here and I kiss him here, and sit back up and then he comes over to me—oh shit, no, wait—I was supposed to kiss him there...' It was like, 'All right... could we do this again?' Kinda tough. Anything but intimate."

No indication whether Casper Van Dien essted the ordeal or not, but then, given the actor's growing rep for taking his role to heart—reports from the set had the enthusiastic Van Dien fetching water for the extras—any number of outcomes can be imagined. Meyer confirmed Van Dien's penchant for buying into his character: "He's out of his mind. I love him, but he's out of his mind. Here's a guy who would work a fifteen, sixteen, seventeen hour day—grueling day—and then he would go take an exercise

class. He was so adrenalinized and so pumped up, and so gung-ho about this character, that he became Johnny Rico for a good six months. I bumped into him not too long ago and he still seemed to be Johnny Rico. A year and a half later and he's still 'Johnny Rico! Hoosahhh!' But he's got a great heart and he's a good guy, he really is. He's just a little nutty."

Then again, it's possible that Van Dien picked up some of his preternatural zeal from director Paul Verhoeven, who impressed many on the cast and crew with his impassioned, off-



camera performances. Paul has got a great sense of humor," said Meyer. "Between the bug noises and acting like a bug, he takes his work seriously. But he doesn't take himself seriously, he's very approachable. If there's something that's going on in the scene that I'm unsure of, or that I feel like I'd like to give him some input about, he's always open."

Meyer was obviously elated that Verhoeven, in fact, welcomed advice from the actors as "constructive criticism, and I think that's really important. He's very open to suggestion and very willing to work with you. He also has his opinions, which are very strong, and he'll say, 'No, no, I really think it

"A sci-fi thing is happening now, but they're all computer-generated scripts. Isn't there a romantic comedy—not casting Julia Roberts—that I could go out for?"



7: The sound of swimming bugs ominously looms near the Trooper stronghold. Meyer realizes an attack is imminent. 8: Standing with the male cadet. "But she's not like this adorable chick." 9: On bug-fight patrol w/ Cooper Van Dien.



should be like this.' Occasionally, if you have another strong-willed actor or strong-headed person, he might get into a little bit of a tiff. But I think everything usually works out well because everybody puts their best foot forward, and I think the scene ultimately winds up working for the best."

Meyer certainly is hoping that her choice, i.e. deferring the film's romantic lead to another actress, will work out for the best. The choice did wind up perplexing some of her cast mates, who, according to Meyer, couldn't quite comprehend Johnny Rico's steadfast refusal to recognize Dixie for the blessing she was. "It's

funny," Meyer shrugged, "because people in the show, when we were filming, were saying, 'Why is he leaving? Why isn't he seeing a good thing in front of his eyes? Why doesn't he just go with you and why is he still hooked on her?' I don't know; I guess that's one of the things I also liked about the character. It's not me, it's how I'm written. It's what [screenwriter] Ed Neumeier did, and Paul and I just really saw eye-to-eye on this character. We knew which direction she was going to take, so I really didn't have a difficult time with her, with being funny or not taking myself too seriously."

"I just wanted to come across real. I didn't want to come across wooden, I didn't want to come across—Look, I'm a pretty girl and I'm playing a tough part. I wanted to be believable. I wanted people to see, from the beginning of the movie, that I was capable of fighting in the wars that I fight—or that she fights—in the third act I didn't want people to say, 'Oh God, here's the pretty girl from school who gets her rifle.' It's so real as I can be without being too macho."

Reality is actually what Meyer is in search of now. Having taken her time since *STARSHIP TROOPERS* wrapped in late '96 to sift through roles, the actress claims to be seeking a stand-out character bereft of heavy armaments or digital mattees. Not an easy quest, these days. "I go after parts, usually, that are strong women," reaffirmed Meyer. "It just turns out that there's such a 'sci-fi thing' happening now. Just look at all these sci-fi pictures that have come out: *CONTACT* and *ALIEN RESURRECTION* and *EVENT HORIZON*. Unfortunately, these are the scripts that I'm reading, because that's what people are interested in and that's what they're making movies of. I had a couple of scripts that I read while I was shooting this movie and

they were all computer-generated scripts, like fire-ants and like all these computer/science fiction movies. And I just said, 'Goddamn it. Aren't there any romantic comedies happening that aren't casting Julia Roberts or Gwyneth Paltrow?? Things that I could go out for?'

"But, for the most part, it's like those sci-fi computer-type movies like HACKERS and THE NET. And there are so many of them because it's some kind of new craze...or I wouldn't say new, but it just seems a lot more people are getting into it, and that's the kind of movies that the studios are making right now. I'd love to make a sweet, romantic comedy—actually, an independent, contemporary film—as opposed to something that takes place in medieval times or 10,000 years in the future."

In the end, says Meyer, it boils down to the eternal question: where does a serious actress find a character who functions as more than the male lead's romantic accessory? "Demi Moore played a pretty strong role in [DISCLOSURE]," Meyer noted. "Sharon Stone plays strong roles in contemporary films. But for the most part with those movies, you have to get the 'gay star'—the guy star is what usually makes a blockbuster. Usually, it's very nice to see a woman's name above the title, and see that movie generate a ridiculous sum of money in its opening weekend. You know: Demi Moore in G.I. JANE, even Julia Roberts in MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING—Julia portrayed a strong character, she wasn't a wimpy, wussy little lady. She had some balls."

"I find it refreshing to see a situation where a woman isn't clutching onto a man's arm for support—like 'Help me, help me, I'm a damsel in distress! Help me, I can't go on without you. Support me! Father my children!' That's what it is, you know—kinda boring." □



Meyer was a match for her male counterparts in DRAGONHEART. "The one thing I didn't want to do," says producer Refikette De Laurentiis, "was a film about dragons and a damsel in distress. I wanted an active and strong girl."

THE FEMMES OF

NICK FURY AND HIS AGENTS OF SHIELD

THE "MELROSE PLACE" SIREN & A "MORTAL KOMBAT" VAMP DISCUSS THE DARK SIDE.

BY FRANK GARCIA

Escaping the comfy L.A. lifestyle of MELROSE PLACE, Lisa Rinna has suited-up in jet black leather for the Fox TV movie, NICK FURY. David Hasselhoff, vacationing from BAYWATCH, plays the title role, helping the wise-cracking commando (aka Val (Rinna), a former lover and G.I. Jane who pokes her teeth with a futuristic combat rifle. Both top dogs operate S.H.I.E.L.D. (Supreme Headquarters International Espionage Law-Enforcement Division), a high-tech agency devoted to combating evil.

NICK FURY is adapted from a Marvel comic book, created by writer Stan Lee and artist Jack Kirby, which debuted in 1963. Photographed last May in Vancouver, British Columbia, the actioner was helmed by Aussie director Rod Hardy. Naturally, the lantern-jawed good good guys com-



Lisa Rinna as Val, a G.I. Jane & Fury's soldier

pete with a rogue's gallery of villains who have organized themselves under a banner identified as HYDRA.

Among the actors supporting Hasselhoff and Rinna: Canadian actor Garry Chalk as Tim "Dum Dum" Dugan, Nick's loyal sidekick, Brit thespian Neil Roberts as inexperienced agent Pierce, Ron Canada as S.H.I.E.L.D. scientist Gabe and Tracy Wa-

terhouse and Adrian Hughes as S.H.I.E.L.D. agents Kate Neville and Clay Quartermain.

Sandra Hess, who previously performed in BEASTMASTER III: THE EYE OF BRAXUS and was cast as Sonya Blade in MORTAL KOMBAT: ANNIHILATION, portrays HYDRA hellion Andrea Von Strucker (aka Viper). David Goyer's script heats up a match between Fury and the femme fatale. Once upon a time, the commando wiped-out the Baron, who was not only Von Strucker's daddy but the big cheese behind

the cryptic alliance. Ms. Von Strucker is heir to HYDRA and she wants to seriously kick Fury's butt. Things start to cook when a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent is murdered, prompting Fury to extricate himself from seclusion and early retirement. Good thing, too, because HYDRA is holding Manhattan hostage with The Death's Head Virus, a conta-



David Hasselhoff's Nick Fury & Rinna

gon developed by the World War II Nazis which has no cure.

Rinna and Hess credit director Hardy for insisting on extensive rehearsals to help them bring their characters to life "We made a point of rehearsing for a week, which doesn't always happen," says Rinna, who appears as Taylor McBride



Paired w/ Spelling, Renna stars NICK FURY in "3-dimensional, rich, funny"

on the Aaron Spelling series. "We all got together and we all sat behind this long table, in this one room, and we really talked about our characters. Talked about how we felt about one another—relationships. And we really created the histories. I think that's the reason why this is working, rather than just coming on

and playing these parts, we really spent time creating relationships. By doing that, I found the 'Val' character. And now I have a good idea what she's about and where she came from. I often reflected upon, 'What parts of me I could use to play her?'

"What really clinched for me was getting in that room with everyone, and seeing

LISA RINNA

"I'm exhausted at the end of the day because male testosterone energy is intense stuff to keep up with. It brings out the toughness in me and I do things that aren't indigenous to Lisa!"

how they feel about Nick... seeing how they feel about Garry Chalk's character, Tim Dugan. I think they've done a really good job about being very specific [about our characters]."

Sandra Hess echoes Renna's insight regarding the rehearsal process. "We all got together and contributed to it. Look, this is my character, and I think she'll say that. There's a lot of humor in it. I think you have to have that. You have action and humor."

"There's a lot of caretaking because of Red Hardy," continues Renna. "He really tries to base it in reality, which I think is why the viewer will connect to it easier because it's real even though it is a comic book. We want to know what's happened to them, what will happen to them. 'I have to bring myself to it. When you read a comic book, it's on the page. Hopefully, I'll take what's written there, and bring the character to life. She's going to be me!'"

Peruse through the comic book and you'll realize that "Val" is an abridgement of the character's more formal appellation, specifically Contessa Valentina Allegra De Fontaine: her parents were members of the French Resistance during World War II and executed by the Nazis. In *Strange Tales* #163, Val reveals to Nick Fury her motivation for joining S.H.I.E.L.D. "I thought if I could carry on in their places, perhaps their death would not be in vain! Eventually, I was contacted by your people."

And Fury replies, "I know how ya feel! As so does every Joe who ever lost a buddy in a war!"

Queried about a favorite

scene in the film, Renna ponders, and then recalls "the one where Nick and I fight. There's heated emotion there, Passion. It's shows the relationship, their history, their passion and love. It shows a lot. It's a great moment. I mean, Val hasn't seen Nick for five years."

Rinna, 32, married actor Harry Hamlin (L.A. LAW) on March 29, 1997. In addition to her current role on MELROSE PLACE, Rinna has bred further familiarity among soap addicts as a result of her three-year stint, as Billie Reed, on NBC's daytime drama DAYS OF OUR LIVES. Last year, she moonlighted on CLOSE TO DANGER, an ABC movie of the week co-starring another MELROSE resident, Rob Estes.

Genre aficionados may want to rummage through their local Blockbuster for 1989's ROBOT WARS: Renna and another soap veteran

NICK FURY is adapted from the Marvel comic book, created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, first debuted in 1963.





Sandra Hess, cast as Rambo's love Blonda (l) in **MORTAL WOMBAT: ANNIHILATION** (6/7), kicks butt (r). But on **FURY**'s femme fatale *J*, retaining w/ David Hasselhoff and Lisa Rinna, Hess is "mean & vicious. Viper wants to own the world."



an, Barbara Crampton (**RE-ANIMATOR**), sweat out the desert heat together. You may as well rent **VANISHED**, a 1996 Danielle Steele confection featuring Rinna and George Hamilton, though the only thing that blisters in this TV melodrama is Hamilton's tan. And I'm sure you share my fondest sentiment—maybe the producer of **THE HOGAN FAMILY** will unload the forgotten sitcom's final season on Nick at Night. During that fabulous year (1988), Rinna was hired to be a part of the series and planted her first on-screen kiss on Jason Bateman. **Yessss.**

I intended to address Sandra Hess with questions involving her preferred sci-fi writers, but somehow it translated into, "How's it feel to play bad girls?"

"I have not had as much fun as anything I've ever played!" exclaims Hess, who



was trained by a martial arts expert for **NICK FURY**. The Swiss actress launched her career with commercials and stage productions. Upon her graduation from high school and a brief flirtation with law, Hess moved to Los Angeles in pursuit of acting gigs.

Fluent in five languages, she landed guest roles on **seaQUEST** (Something in

(the Air), BAYWATCH NIGHTS (Takeover) and an episode of SLIDERS for the Sci-Fi Channel. Only a few months ago, Hess filmed a very significant episode of HIGHLANDER in Paris, which has been tailored as a proposed pilot for a series. If successfully sold, the spin-off—produced by the same creators and producers of the parent show—will be shot on French and Canadian locales during spring '98.

"I play Viper in NICK FURY," says Hess. "This character's so far away from who I really am, and that's so much fun. There are really no limits. It's 'Ah!' To go that far!—to be so vicious and mean. It's playing games. In the comic book, she's also referred to as Andrea Von Strucker. She's the evil Baron's daughter. She has an evil twin, Werner. She's very strong and driven, and she'll stop at nothing to get what she wants. And what she wants is to conquer and own the world."

"Her father had plans to take over the world and create a Fourth Reich, using the Death's Head virus that he had created. She wants to control the world with this virus. Her father had all these plans and she was very close to her father. And then he was killed by Nick Fury."

"And that starts the plot. Not only does she hate Nick Fury because he killed her father, but Nick is taking away her dream of the future. She was in love with her father."

Viper initially appeared in the comic book as an unnamed blonde who approached the Baron, a caricature of malevolence who's seated on a plush chair and gently stroking the mane of a black panther. Standing before him, she recites the HYDRA Oath, "Hail HYDRA! Immortal HYDRA! We shall never be destroyed! Cut off a limb and two shall take its place! We serve none but the master—as the world shall soon serve us! Hail HYDRA!" Readers were not enlightened, until

SANDRA HESS

"It's totally a revenge plot. My character, Viper, loves killing people. It's like a sexual excitement. If you enjoy being mean & vicious, you're the type of villain that people love to hate."



NICK FURY: David Hasselhoff, director Rod Perry and Stefanie Russell as interpersonal agent Gale Rancick. Said Sandra Hess, "We all contributed to it."

several issues later, that the woman was the Baron's daughter.

"It's totally a revenge plot," continues Hess. "She enjoys and loves killing people. She's driven by her cause."

Contributive to the development of her character, notes Hess, was a personal challenge "to not be afraid of going into the dark places within yourself. You have to find the dark places and learn to use them, and you can't be intimidated by that. You can't go halfway, you have to go all the way. And I think the key to it is that if you're just mean-spirited, that's only one thing. But if you're mean and vicious and enjoying it, those are usually the kind of villains that people love to hate."

This philosophy was applied to a similar role that Hess performed on *Super Man*, one of LOIS & CLARK's third season episodes: the actress was cast as a resurrected Nazi soldier who attempts to renew the Third Reich's ignoble goal of world dominion. One

of the quirks of her job is eliminating the big guy in tights.

Hess cites her favorite NICK FURY scene "the one where I, as Viper, executes one of my own men to intimidate the rest of the troops. The others are all watching on monitors. It begins with me in a long evening gown, I look like I'm going to the opera. And I walk over, and I look at this guy, and I shoot him. It's scary because of the enjoyment. She releases it! The director and I decided that for Viper, it's almost like a sexual excitement to shoot this guy."

"We try to keep it sort of real but—don't forget—it's a comic book, so you have the license to be campy. You have to look at the whole show, you have to examine its style: it's very realistic but yet, the way it's written, it's not strictly a filmed comic book. And it still manages to be very funny."

"It's wild. Everything is wild about my character—my nails, my costumes. So you go along with it and it

makes it so much easier to get into the whole thing. Believe me, it comes very easily."

The cast's camaraderie preceded production of the movie. Hess and Rinnas—as well as supporting actor Neil Roberts—have previously worked with David Hasselhoff either on BAYWATCH or BAYWATCH NIGHTS. "I worked with David before, about two years ago," acknowledges Hess. "I love working with him. I think David is just about one of the nicest men you could ever work with. He's so down to earth, sweet and very funny. And he's always, always going for the humor."

As a tough and faithful S.H.I.E.L.D. agent, Rinnas is in the unique position of "bein' one of the guys." This gender-reversal honed a few personal observations including, Rinnas slyly grins, "that boys love to do stunts and action. They get very hyped up. Being around male testosterone energy, I'm always exhausted at the time because that's intense energy to keep up with them."

"It brings the toughness out of me. When I play a character, I'm usually very becoming. All of a sudden, I lose myself and I'll go, 'Oh, I'm the character!' And in this role as Val, I've definitely taken on things that aren't at all indigenous to Lisa!"

Before Rinnas returned to the set—running and jumping, huffing hot-metal laser-sight rifles in her arms—she reflects on the overall quality of the film. "It's rich, three-dimensional, it's funny," she says with conviction. "There are many, many different colors. I haven't seen very much, actually. David and Neil have seen much more than I have. But it's most certainly coming together. And the actors are certainly well-acquainted with their characters. I've had a really good time, I've enjoyed myself. It's fun and it's a good script. I think you'll like it." □

BLADE

N'BUSHE WRIGHT VAMPIRE CONSORT

CO-STARRING WITH WESLEY SNIPES IN "BLADE," SHE RESISTED PLAYING HER "VAMP" AS A DAMSEL-IN-DISTRESS.

BY DALE KUTZERA

Make no mistake, N'bushe Wright has a lot to live up to. Her name, after all, means "Godly One" in Swahili. If a steadily building career is any indication, then N'bushe is well on her way to making her parents seem president. After just a few years in the business, she has appeared in 5 films including ZEBRAHEAD with Michael Rappaport, and FRESH with Samuel L. Jackson. Even working with the critically acclaimed Hughes brothers on DEAD PRESIDENTS, however, couldn't prepare her for the \$40 million dollar Hollywood thrill ride that is BLADE.

"Each movie gradually gets better and bigger-budgeted, but this one was huge," said Wright. "Dealing with the lower budgeted films is a completely different medium. This was awesome, but intense. The special effects and the physicality and the action were very



Making her film debut in ZEBRAHEAD, N'bushe Wright was cast on a lark embedded in an interracial romance. "The director was wonderful."

different from what I was used to. I was in shape, but honey, staying up to Wesley was no joke. I love and respect all my films, but this was the next level, for sure."

Wright, 27, grew up in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of New York and a trained as a dancer, eventually studying with the prestigious Martha Graham and Alvin Ailey companies. The daughter of a jazz musician, she was surrounded by a creative atmosphere while growing up, and attended the LeGuardia High School for the Performing Arts (Denzel Washington was a classmate). "I was always into the arts and lived in a culturally intense environment. It was something that was going to happen. I love dance as much as acting, and I write poetry and, lately, some stories. It's a different medium going from the head to the paper."

Although Wright had studied acting and had been actively auditioning for a year before her debut in ZEBRAHEAD,



Wright and Wesley Snipes: **BLADE**. The actress roles the \$50 million film was "intense. I was in shape but, honey, staying up to Wesley was no joke. We try to beat the clock by chasing vampires and finding cures."

she was still surprised when she was cast as an inner-city teen involved in a tense interracial romance. "I was dancing at the time and hadn't done anything before going straight into ZEBRAHEAD. [Director] Anthony Drazin was wonderful."

The success of ZEBRAHEAD led to the role of Nicole in director Boaz Yakin's **FRESH** and, later, in the American Film Institute production, **THE SWING** in which she portrayed one of the first African American opera singers. This independent work attracted the attention of Hollywood casting directors and a leading role in Walt Disney's **DEAD PRESENTS**. The Hugh's Brothers film focused on a black Vietnam veteran and his difficulties in adjusting to civilian life. Wright played the hero's girlfriend, who was torn between her sympathy for the man and her fear of his violent behavior.

Wright recurrently appeared in a couple of television series, **F.L. FLY AWAY** and **HOMICIDE**. With most of her work and life centered

on the East Coast, Wright was reluctant to journey to Los Angeles and audition for **BLADE**. "I had heard about **BLADE**, but they weren't even looking at people out here [in New York]. But my manager heard about it and I auditioned on tape, even though you never book anything from going on tape." Wright was surprised her videotaped audition attracted the producer's attention, but didn't think her chances were worth the expense of a trip to L.A. Finally, after her manager agreed

"It was important to me that my character not be completely dependent on Blade. Sometimes, Wesley and I got into fights about it: I'm no pussy."

—N'bushe Wright—

to pick up the cost of the trip, Wright met with the producers. "I gave them everything I could, but—five yards I was kind of sad. I didn't feel I had it. And I called my manager and said, 'I feel terrible,'" and he said, 'Hold on.' He had a call on the other line. When he came back, he told me, 'That was the producer. You got the job.'"

The role of Hematologist Karen Jansen is central to the concept in **BLADE** that vampirism is a blood disease. As the half-vampire, half-human Blade hunts down his immortal enemies, he consumes a blood-substitute concocted by Abraham Whistler (Kris Kristofferson), his mentor. Whistler searches for a cure for the disease before Blade develops a tolerance for the blood-substitute and is forced to pursue more traditional feeding practices—namely the necks of warm-blooded mammals.

"At the lab where I work, we're doing tests on sickle cell patients when this vampire runs into my hospital all burned up," explains Wright. "He dies and we're about to close up when he jumps off the table. Then here comes Blade flying behind. I'm terrified, and the vampire jumps on top of me and takes a hefty bite out of my neck. Blade has a choice to leave me on the ground or to whack me up and take me

Wright trains her **BLADE** character, Karen Jansen, "to not a winner. It was important to me she had her own weight." The film adapts the Marvel comic (9).





Wright as opera singer Nicola in *FRESH*. The film earned Sundance awards for co-star Sean Nelson (j) and director Reed Tuck. Critic Roger Ebert admired the film's "brilliant complexity, a story of depth and power."

off and try to cure me."

This pivotal decision gave Snipes cause for concern. "Adding a woman into the piece suggested some problems," said Snipes. "We don't want to make Blade seem like he's a superhero playboy—someone who picks up chicks on the side while he's luting other people on the neck. But at the same time I didn't want him to be completely callous and cold like T2, almost emotionless. That can work, but it's kind of redundant. So why does he take her along? He has lines that say there is no room for prisoners and he's not out to save humans in that context. He saves them vicariously out of his revenge against the vampires who killed his mother, and made him what he is. So why does he take this girl, especially one who has been bitten? 'Cause he knows she will turn later on, and he would normally kill her. We had to structure it so, in the beginning, he's cold and callous and unfeeling. He could take her or leave her, but then as it progresses he becomes more concerned about her, more sensitive and protective of her. You see at times when the human side of him has feelings and attractions for her."

The romantic attractions between Blade and Dr. Jansen are never overt. "We never go there," said Wright. "It's subtle and underlying. He's very cold and distant, and I'm a doctor—I see a potential patient or someone who needs help. I'm there trying to find a cure for Blade as well as myself, 'cause I'm starting to turn and they might kill me."

"We never wanted them to get sexual," said Goyne. "They flirt, but our idea

was we never wanted them to have intercourse. Part of that is that Blade wouldn't allow himself to do that, 'cause in his mind he's not human and that is a pleasure he is denying himself."

While Blade may be cold and distant on screen, Wright found Snipes—the actor and first-time producer—to be engaging and equally active off-screen. "I had seen him in all these action movies, but had no idea about how brilliant he was. His perspective is so broad, from the producing—he got the project together and got it on its feet—

Wright in *DEAD FRENCHMEN*. The *Washington Post* rated the film "in like a shotgun blast in the face. It's that powerful, but brutal and that ugly."



"We don't want to make Blade seem like he's a heroic playboy—someone who picks up chicks on the side while biting others on the neck."

—Wesley Snipes—

to the acting and physical stuff. From an actor's perspective, it was a pleasure to learn so much about the medium of acting on this big, \$50 million movie scale. I was like a babe and he made it wonderful, comfortable and taught me so much about the camera. I had to learn about the stunts in relations to what the camera sees. If you're going to skip somebody, your hand has to be at a specific place."

Among Snipes' mandates were for Wright to view videotaped dailies of the previous day's filming. "I don't like to see myself during my work. I don't want to be judging myself, but Wesley said, 'Uh-uh, honey, you're gonna have to see your work.' This was very traumatic, but that is how he wanted it to be done. He wanted us to watch our work, examining and re-examining the character for ourselves. That was interesting and new, and then I wanted to see more."

Wright may play a modern, well-educated woman in *BLADE*, but the age-old position women hold in male action scenarios was difficult to escape. She resisted any attempt to turn Dr. Jansen into a damsel-in-distress. "My character was pretty tough. She wasn't a wimp," said Wright. "I tried to add an urban perspective, where she had done research on her own, in her own community. It was important to me that she had her own weight, and was not completely dependent on Blade. Wesley wanted me dependent upon him. Sometimes we got into fights about that, but I'm not a pussy. I know she has to have a certain vulnerability, but a woman in the '90s, in New York—it was important to show a side of the character where she was afraid, but not a wimp."

Often when Wright stood her ground, two versions of the given scene were filmed, one in which Wright played a needful victim, and another interpretation that conveyed more strength and inner resolve. This way, the ultimate tone of her performance could be tailored in the editing process. "[Stephen] Norrington had his vision and was first to say, 'Nutsa, I'm not sure how they see you, but I'm hoping it won't be as this week,



BLADE (Wesley Snipes) draws his sword for another round with vampires. "I didn't want Blade to be completely callous & cold like T4," says Snipes. "In the beginning, he's unfeeling. But as the film progresses he becomes more concerned about [Wright's character]—more sensitive and protective."

whispering chick who has to always be saved. I want you to take it into your hands to be very independent."

It is her character's selflessness that ultimately saves Blade in the film's climax, when she offers the contents of her jugular to revive the weakened hero. The sexual overtones are implicit when you realize that Blade had never bitten a human neck until that moment. "The most enjoyable scene for me was where Wesley sucked the blood out of my neck. There are so many

scenes of falling into holes and grabbing pieces of bones from bodies and beating the shit out of guys, that being in a scene with him sucking the blood out of my neck was fun. I loved it."

Since completing *BLADE*, Wright has taken the plunge and moved to Los Angeles where she hopes to capitalize on the increased visibility the film will bring. "I've lived in New York all my life," she said. "The West Coast is different. The pace and people and the perspective is very different. I've heard

everyone is drop-dead gorgeous and that to me is a lot of the focus. You can't say it's any easier than New York. You have to keep yourself inspired. What I'm finding in life is you do anything if you have love and God and respect. You basically want to take that with you everywhere. I want my next job to be a character with a feminine perspective of true substance. Many times I'm the girl in relation to the guy, which is wonderful, but it would be nice to have a project where I'm kind of flexing." □

BLADE, L. Wright examines the hero's preferred weapon. As for moments with Snipes' good guy, Wright notes, "We never go there. It's subtle and unobtrusive." **R.** Snipes & Wright encounter the evil Vicar (Stephen Dorff), an angelic vampire hyacin. **TRILL LEE** (l. 4) and **LUKE KILL** were cast as supporting players.



MOLLY RINGWALD PRETTY IN PINK

SCI-FI, STEPHEN KING AND PSYCHOS: THE FORMER EMBODIMENT OF TEEN ANGST RECOUNTS HER CAREER.

BY PAUL WARDLE

The former "coming of age" kid has turned thirty. One suspects that Molly Ringwald—once the embodiment of adolescence—severs her new status. After all, OFFICE KILLER—her new "grown-up" movie—is no PRETTY IN PINK. It even made me forget BREAK-



FAST CLUB (but who hasn't?). "My character is really the office tart," Ringwald cracked while browsing through the Toronto International Festival. And she's the only one in the cast who's perceptive enough to realize Carol Kane is a frumpy serial killer.

But before asking Ringwald about OFFICE



IF PRETTY IN PINK, one of the Molly trilogy that rendered huge teenies just ordinary. Her "adult" roles (BIAUCIOUS, 4 proved less profitable.

KILLER, my mind drifted to a couple of teenage attendants. They were drawing blanks on Ringwald, didn't have a clue that her iconic "style setter of Right Now" celebrity qualified for a Time magazine cover: the 1986 profile pegged Ringwald as "the one young movie actress who can set teens quaking at the haxof-

fice, though typically—in today's fragmented pop culture—she remains virtually unknown to anyone over 30." Ironically, a little more than a decade later, she's virtually unknown to youths under 20.

Ringwald launched her career with a single season (1979-80) on THE FACTS OF LIFE sitcom. She made

her film debut in a contemporary adaptation of Shakespeare's TEMPEST (1982) and followed with a role as an androgynous waif in a 3-D clunker called SPACE-HUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE. Time magazine christened her subsequent films for John Hughes—SIXTEEN CANDLES, THE BREAKFAST CLUB, PRETTY IN PINK—as "The 'Molly' trilogy," films which mine the emotional convulsions that make every teenager feel he or she is the first lonely explorer on the darker side of the moon." But her post-1986 films were commercial and critical flops. Fading into notoriety, her name ignominiously turned up on a web called the "Washed-Update," a chronicle of movie and TV has-beens.

In 1992, Ringwald kicked off a four-year residency in France. "I always sort of jokingly threatened to just pack up and move to Paris... Finally, I wanted to learn to speak French. It was either move to Paris or Montreal. I chose Paris. I've always been a bit of a francophile. I'd already gone to a French



Making a comeback in *THE STAND*, adapted from Stephen King's novel, Ringwald was cast as "Fleeta Goldsmith" (l. w/ Gary Sinise). R. With Sinise & Ruby Dee. P: Pregnancy prosthetic is applied by Steve Johnson & Bill Corso.



MOLLY RINGWALD

"The films I did early on were interesting at the time. That was me as a teenager, this is me as an adult... I don't care how big the part is, it's the project and people that appeal to me."

school!"

Naturally, the Rosewood (CA) Yankos made a French movie, *ENFANTS DE SALAD* (1996), delivered her dialogue in French. Though the cast included global bombshells Claudia Cardinale and Nathalie Baye, the film's release was limited. Mostly to France. But Ringwald doesn't care: "Everything's on a smaller scale in France than in Hollywood. There's not as much money. There are not as many people. Seems like when you do a Hollywood film, there's a lot of people standing around and you can't exact-

again and to be really challenged like that.

"The one funny difference between the French and American film industry is that the Americans try to figure out the solution to everything. Every possible problem that could occur, they come up with a solution beforehand. That way, they're prepared. And [in France], it doesn't seem like they're prepared for anything. So where a problem does occur, everything stops and everyone sits around and discusses it [laughing] for a long time. Everybody contributes, not just the di-



ly figure out who's doing what. Really, that number of people is not needed at all. The proof is that I've done smaller films, with less crew, and it gets done. Sometimes it even gets done more efficiently."

"But," she adds, "the egos are just as big. The star system is just the same. It was funny because I was the only American in the movie, and the least known in France. I felt like an ingenué [laughs], like it was my first movie. So it was really exciting to 'go back there': to feel like a child

receptor or producer. They have all these philosophical discussions, then the crew goes back to work."

Returning to America, Ringwald followed suit with other ex-juvenile stars (Justine Bateman, Brooke Shields): each circumvented a moribund movie career by landing a sitcom. But Ringwald's ABC series, *TOWNIES*, was short-lived and she segued into *OFFICE KILLER*, which was a repudiation of her French experience. Philosophical discussions, low budget, feeling like a kid again, doing the



Cast as *Nell* in *SPACEJUNKIE: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE*, a \$14.4 million 3-D saga (original title: *ADVENTURES IN THE CREEP ZONE*). *T&E*: Out of this world w/ Peter Strauss. *R*: A captive audience for director Overholser



MOLLY RINGWALD

"Hollywood is very male-driven, good parts are for men. Money people will not invest solely on a female star. Even with a great script, they'll do it if they get 1 of the 5 popular male stars."

auteur thing. Producer Christine Vachon (I SHOT ANDY WARHOL) hired New York photographer Cindy Sherman to make her directorial debut. Sherman, whose still life exhibitions were influenced by B-movies, has professed an admiration for slasher films like NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, FRIDAY THE 13TH and Dario Argento movies. Her photo renderings earned mainstream visibility in coffee table books, and Sherman's preferred model is herself.

In addition to helming OFFICE KILLER, Sherman

born] where we sort of strayed from the script a little bit, and she just got gleeful: "You're improvising! This is great!" She had that first time joy that I think you lose after a while. She was very easy to work with. I don't know that much about photography, so if someone like me asked her the most mundane, obvious question about it, she'd take the time to explain."

Ringwald is briefly interrupted by an assistant. It all has something to do with rehearsal of a play, scheduled for New York, that will require the actress, in every



co-wrote the screenplay. Her apprenticeship as director prompted no tension from the cast. "Not at all," insists Ringwald. "I've done films with first-time directors before, and Cindy is the kind of person who is incredibly grounded. She's down to earth and funny. I don't think there's anything pretentious about her. You might expect someone with her body of work to have a little bit of pretension, but there's just none."

"Cindy was so enthusiastic. There was one scene I did with Jeanne Tripple-

performance, to age from 11 to 40 years old. Made me inquisitive. Why traverse from teen idol to sitcom star to 'office tart' to Broadway? "The films that I did early on were interesting to me at the time," half-smiles Ringwald. "I don't want to say I'm a different person because I'm not, but that was definitely me as a teenager. This is me as an adult. I don't care how big or how small the part is. It's the project and the people involved that I find the most interesting."

Not unlike Cindy Sher-

OFFICE KILLER

NO SLASH OR SILICONE: HORROR PIC LEANS ON TALENT.

BY PAUL WARDLE

There's bad news for gorehounds: domestic and foreign markets have gauged explicit violence & naked babes as the product of bankrupt imaginations (bottom line: unprofitable). No more gore (a phrase that might serve as next election's bumper sticker). Merchants at this year's VSFA and AFM conventions couldn't unload commerce that cruised on the ancient 80s formula matching slashers and silicone. Thus latest development is even worse news for hackneyed "home movie" misogynists who made a quick buck hanging on the "sex begets violence" meal ticket. Time to pack it in, boys; flip burgers, get honest work.

Making her directorial debut in *OFFICE KILLER*, Cindy Sherman scotched cop-out carnage and opted for black comedy. A low budget precluded slick special effects, so Sherman communicated her story the old-fashioned way—leaning on the actors and script. The scenario: Dorine Douglas (Carol Kane) is a frumpy, repressed workhorse who labors in a faceless corporate firm. When the company transfers her to part-time after 16 years of faithful service, Douglas begins a little "downsizing" of her own, mousing co-workers and blackmailing surviving employees. Only the office hustler (Molly Ringwald) suspects that Douglas is the culprit. The film culminates with Douglas throwing herself the office party she never had, never mind that the



Reunited as *OFFICE KILLER*'s last, "I prefer smaller, independent films. It's not crazy about big budget 'let's be it up in a neat little box' kinds of things."

celebrants are the crumbling corpses of her victims. Negative side: Except for the eccentricities effortlessly performed by Kane and Ringwald, not to mention Jeanne Tripplehorn's embezzler, the characters are one-dimensional (i.e. road kill). Plus side: Though Sherman's still life photography has earned accolades,

her motion picture imagery doesn't self-consciously draw attention to itself; unlike so many James Ivory movies, scenes aren't framed through a viewfinder as murals.

She insists the first draft of the screenplay didn't politicize the "downsizing" issue; the social potshots were integrated, at the re-

quest of "higher-ups," into subsequent rewrites. "It was difficult for me," says Sherman, "because I don't think narratively, I just think visually." Plying her trade as a shutterbug, Sherman deflects criticism for routinely serving as her own model. "That's right, because I appear in much of my work, a lot of people just assume that I'm a frustrated actress and that I've always wanted to do that. That's not the case. I think acting is totally different from what I do. I just stand still for my pictures."

Reflecting on her supervision of more animate subjects (i.e. actresses), Sherman initially confesses "my experience as a still photographer, where I don't have any assistants at all, even in my studio. It's just me and the camera. The process of having a film crew around is so labor-intensive on many levels. I was thankful there were people whose job it was to just worry about props or camera dollys."

"I thought it would be easier to use actors who had name recognition, just because they'd be more professional. But, on the other hand, they do have more ego than unseasoned newcomers—especially with four women on our set, who are stars in their own right. I realized there definitely is a juggling of who you have to pamper. It just seemed like everybody needed attention, even when not shooting a scene with that person. It's like dealing with eggs of little children. I never expected that the director would become like 'Mom.'"

man, Ringwald will eventually divert from her chosen profession to climb into the director's chair: "My taste generally gravitates towards what would be considered smaller, independent movies. I'm not crazy about big-budget, 'let's tie it up in a neat little bow at the end' kinds of things."

The smaller, independent *OFFICE KILLER* was boot camp. While on the set, she surveyed various modes of dramatic training and—one thing for sure—method acting is out. "I don't believe it's necessary to gain 50 pounds to make people believe you're overweight. To me, all that is not acting. There's as much you can do with your posture, your muscles. I think that's what acting is. If you find yourself in the theatre going, 'Wow, I wonder how long it took her to gain all that weight or to learn that accent,' it just takes you right out of the



experience."

Before the conversation shifted to Stanislavsky vs. Jenny Craig, I wanted to pop the big question: how does the former Ms. Frem Queen explain her transformation into office tart? "Jeanne Tripplehorn's character, Nora, wants to work her way and connive her way to the top," replied Ringwald. "But my charac-

MOLLY RINGWALD

"My character in *OFFICE KILLER* is really the office tart: she's content to sleep and connive her way to the top. She's one of those girls that you just want to kill. She was fun to play."



W/ Andrew McCarthy in *FRESH HORMES*: Ringwald was praised for her sensuality (8) but the public didn't buy her mature image. Total gross: \$5.64 million.



ter, Kim Poole, is content to sleep her way to the top [laughs]. Whatever is the easiest route, she'll do it. She doesn't mind coming-on to her friend's boyfriend. She's one of those girls that you just want to kill. She was a fun character to play."

She's fun to watch, too. The script presents a vicious picture of Kim Poole as a human hemorrhage, but Ringwald resists campy panache and adds some shades of grey. "Maybe I'm more subtle than I think I am," she giggled, "because when I was playing Kim, I really thought I was going off out. And then when I saw the movie, I thought, 'Wow, she is kind of sympathetic.' As originally written, there were very few redeeming qualities in Kim. I had a line that was really hard for me to say but, of course, I did it because that was Kim. But when I said, 'Oh, they're probably off together. They're probably lezzies!'—every time I'd say it, I'd start to crack up [laughs]. I mean, what kind of person says something like that? It's so stupid. But that's Kim. She's very immature. In fact, she's the only one who knows what's going on but, the way she talks, no one's gonna believe her. No one takes her seriously."

It was at this point that Ringwald plunged into an impromptu impersonation of her slutty working girl, often dropping the character's operative "whatever" word. Out of the film's context, Kim is an undiluted bimbo; it's to Ringwald's credit that the character isn't booted into the same cathode cemetery where busted Fox sitcoms—and their wispy ingenues—waste eternity. Diagnosing her character's "soul," Ringwald attributes to Kim's appeal to "my sympathetic face. It kind of betrays me when I'm feeling an emotion. My face automatically reacts, which I think is a really good thing for an actor. It happens more than I'm aware, and when I saw the movie, I cringed a little. I

KILLER DIRECTOR

CINDY SHERMAN, HORROR FAN, TRIMMED THE VIOLENCE.

By PAUL WARDLE

"There's not a trace of pretension about her," said Molly Ringwald, regarding her *OFFICE KILLER* director. The film was helmed by photographer Cindy Sherman, whom critics have identified as a post-modernist. But Sherman hates labels, so debate among yourselves. I'll shridge my appraisal of her still life to a single observation: Sherman's photos provoke thought, they're not pretty in a provincial capacity. Her imagery in *OFFICE KILLER* is similarly ingenious; she squeezes her quirky homage to horror films out of a box-constrictive hudget and the resultant pictures are not always pretty. Take, for example, the scene where a psychotic copy editor passes popcorn among her co-workers, all of whom are decayed corpses.

But Sherman didn't volunteer to direct the film. Matter of fact, she had to be talked into it: "The money, apparently, was there before I was even involved with it. My producer, Christine Vachon, was approached by Good Machine, another production company. They had money from investors who wanted to do a series of low budget horror films."

"What I brought to the story," continues Sherman, who co-wrote the script with Elise MacAdam, "was kind of influenced by the way I work in my studio, surrounded by all these plastic body parts and transposing that into a realistic situation. I wanted it to take place in the city because I wanted to sleep in my own bed at the end of the day. I didn't want to be in some motel in the countryside."

"I definitely didn't want to do some MTV special effects thing. On the other hand, I really didn't know what I wanted visually from it. I wanted some kind of unusual framing that, hopefully, would create some kind of tension. I was hoping to do a stylized thing like *Dario Argento*. Unfortunately, we didn't really have the budget to get the kind of close-up lenses and zoom lenses



Sherman, coauthoring with an *OFFICE KILLER* extra, in an admirer of Henry Thicke. Icons include *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET* and the notorious *I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE*.

as that would've been ideal. In some cases, we didn't even have the budget to redo things because we were under time limitations."

Restraining herself from spilling a surfeit of guts, Sherman admits that "slasher groupies" may be disappointed with her subtlety: "There are certain expectations that go along with this genre—and this film doesn't really have them. Ideally, I wish it did function on a more terrifying level, the way *HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER* did. That doesn't mean I'm not happy with the way it turned out. I like the fact that it's evoking horror film stereotype, but not really scaring you. It is more psychological horror."

"Actually, there were some final script versions that I had actually toned down. They had been written so that you're seeing Carol Kane's character hack off hands and watching what's being done to people's bodies. I obviously wanted all that to be off-

screen. Even though I think I made the film that I intended to make, now I'm starting to question how it's been talked about so far. I just get nervous about people's expectations. This is a different sort of business than making art, because there's more money involved and it's sort of out of my hands at this point. But I'd rather people know that it's not a blood and guts fest."

The film debuted on December 3rd in Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Chicago. But, what with the damn "low budget" and all, the distributorship was limited to "two-week, direct-to-warehouse" engagements. "Depending on how it does, I guess that will determine where else it goes," said Sherman. Will she direct another film? "I'm definitely spoiled by my other medium. But I might try it again. I just haven't been bitten by some film bug," she smiles. Broadly. □

Sherman's photography is globally accessible in a series of coffee table books; her attention for the viewer is often manifested in still life.



thought, 'Oh, I didn't know my face was doing that.' This is why I think it's a really bad thing that some acting schools want people to act in front of mirrors. I think that's the worst thing you could ever do. I think the greatest gift an actor can have is a face that expresses what's in their mind.

"Silent screen superstar Mary Pickford would speak at length about how she was able to portray girls half her real age convincingly. A child's facial expressions differ from adults. Where adults control their facial muscles in an act of composure, children's faces—particularly the eyes and mouth—betray every emotion. That makes me think of Fellini's *LA STRADA*. Fellini's wife played a child-like clown," she began.

Fellini loved surrealism and clown. I hate both, so I was kind of relieved when Ringwald's assistant made a comeback appearance that abruptly killed the "clown" story. I did learn a little more about Ringwald's stage gig. The title of the ensemble piece is *How I Learned To Drive*. And the plot? It has something to do with "how I learned to drive—and how I learned about sex. Scenes are divided into me at age 11, me at 13, me at 17, me at 19. It's very easy for me to play younger...at least right now. I guess I'm not that old. I don't really worry about it too much. I think if you get in a scene, the rest just sort of happens."

We had less than 30 minutes to wrap-up this whole thing, and I still felt pretty shortchanged in regard to *OFFICE KILLER*.

"Ms. Ringwald, how did you research your film character? Have you previously punched an office clerk?"

She initially shakes her head. Then she blinks. "Actually, I take that back," said Ringwald. "I worked in a sort of office environment. I had a company at Columbia for development, and I was probably the only actor

MOLLY RINGWALD

"It's hard to grow up in front of the public. It was really important for me to step away and to grow up outside of the public eye. That way, I'd come back as an adult & that's what I did."



Cost as a wall in *SPACEHUNTER* (80), Ringwald was initially directed by Jack Lefauve (L.S.A. *TIGRESS OF SEBENA*) who was replaced by Lamont Johnson.



or actress who actually went to the office every day, except when I was doing a film for a couple of months. I had never been in that environment before, where you get up and go to work in an office. I just spent a day reading and writing, taking meetings with different writers, but I admit it's a different thing [than the typical office environment]."

Then again, Ringwald—a professional actress since she was 13—spent most of her adolescence on movie sets, without the usual "growing pains." She was never really a teenager—she only played one on TV and film. "When I went to France, that was the closest I ever came to a normal life," admitted Ringwald. "I never had that kind of a life before, where you can walk down the street and be anonymous. I think it's always good for actors to have had a job like that, to have something to draw back on. They can learn how to play people with normal jobs, normal lives—not play movie stars."

"It sounds kind of silly to say that I regret not doing a boring day job, but in a way I do. I tried to get a job as a valet parking attendant when I was about fifteen. [laughs] All my friends were valets in this place called Chuck's Parking in Los Angeles. They were always talking about these great parties they went to, and I just wanted to hang out with my friends. So I went and applied but they wouldn't give it to me. They thought I wouldn't take it seriously."

"You know, it's hard to grow up in front of the public eye. There needs to be a period of time where you step away somewhat, in order to have a normal life if that's what you want. Other people just work like machines and don't have a life. That was certainly not what I wanted. It was really important for me to step away, and to grow up somewhat, outside of the public eye. That way, I could come back

as an adult and that's what I did."

And how did the teenage Ringwald acclimate herself to the fame wrought by film, "Ringlet" groupies and *Teen* magazine? "I dealt with it very cautiously. I wouldn't say I was very comfortable with it, I was very unprepared for it. I mean, any time you do something like that—whether it's an episode of *LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE* or a movie—people in school look at you differently. It was worse for me because my films became so big, and my whole audience was the kids I was going to school with. But, by the time I was going to high school, I was working so much that I was hardly ever in school.

"I remember that a girl, who I had known for over two years, passed a note to me. Usually, when we passed notes in school, it was to ask if you wanted to go out to lunch or can you give her a ride home. Then I read this note and it said, 'Can I please have your autograph?' It was just so weird! I had written her a million notes in class, she probably had my signature on every single one of them. Why would she want my autograph? It was very bizarre. I don't get the whole autograph thing. It's like they need proof! When I was 10 years old, I met Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly at this function and I will always remember that. I don't expect people to say, 'Uh-Uh, you didn't!' and I whip out this autograph as proof!"

But, as our interview came to a close, I found myself genuinely drawn to Ringwald because she's not some Hollywood relic who's pickled her past with self-defense technology. I mean, she admits that her career is checkered with duds: "Unfortunately, you're only as successful as your films



BREAKFAST CLUB, a film that launched Ringwald into teen icon. But her celebrity declined as profits diminished ("God forbid if you did 3 films in a row that bombed").

are. When you're a film actor, you're judged by how well your last two films did and God forbid if you did three films in a row that bombed. It happens! If a movie is successful, they always say, 'Oh, these people are surefire box office!' There's nobody who's surefire box office. Every single actor that you can think of

has been in a lull. You can choose your projects and who you want to work with carefully. But then a lot of it is just luck, and the weather and whether or not people want to go to the location that weekend, and whether the promotional campaign has enough money in it. In a perfect world, these things shouldn't matter. But it does

matter, only in that a commercially successful movie enables you to continue working on good projects."

I note that some of her male co-stars—Anthony LaPaglia and Andrew McCarthy—were spared similar ostracization, flops notwithstanding (well, there is some poetic justice. Her other co-stars include Andrew Dice Clay and Pauly Shore). "There are so many more actresses than male actors," noted Ringwald. "But it's still very male driven, so most of the good parts are for men. It's getting better lately, but the money people will not invest solely on a female star. Even if it's a great script, they might only do it if they can get one of the five popular male stars." As she shuffled her notes into a handbag, Ringwald sneered that it "even trickles down to independent films, which you'd think would be a safe



haven. But even independent films need to get their money approved. That will only happen if you get a male star who's known, if not domestically, then internationally."

Temporarily evicted from corporate filmmaking, she'll move into another medium. Melly Ringwald will never be homeless. □





BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

"Milo Manara is simply the greatest living artist in the business today. He's the fans' favorite, the artists' artist, an unparalleled technician. His women are simply every man's fantasy...and then some. Every issue of Heavy Metal that he appears in is a complete sell-out!"

Kevin Eastman

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief, Heavy Metal magazine

Once upon a time, comic books were regarded as juvenile junk food: though a distraction from junior's homework, the medium was hardly a threat. Then, in 1964, France dropped the bomb. Polarizing himself from the U.S. mainstream, artist Jean-Claude Forest rendered *Barbarella* into a promiscuous sci-fi siren who often

© Lara-Lyn Petersen greets an invisible man in BUTTERSCOTCH, an adaptation of Manara's sci-fi erotica. T: Italian edition of Manara's GLUCK, also adapted into a 3-D series. Above: The original art that inspired our centerfold. Oh yes, Ms. Petersen is cast in both series.



The Erotic World of MILG MANARA



7) Agent Red Steele (Robert Downey Jr.) and waitress Tangerine (De'Von Power) in *THE CLICK's* *Axis of Thunder* (as you were expecting Oscar Wilde? Don't worry, we'll keep reminding you this episode is a spy spoof in later pages). 8) Milo Manara develops storyboards for an '80 movie adaptation of *THE CLICK*.



KEVIN EASTMAN

"Milo Manara is the greatest artist in the business. His women are every man's fantasy...& then some!"

traversed the galaxies sans wardrobe. A colony of scaly, "fishy-smelling" aliens spray the naked sprite with a de-lousing fluid, claiming "This vaporized substance will protect your epidermis, earth girl." Luxuriating in the moisture and effervescent gas, Barbarella replies, "It deserves it, if I do say so. This isn't the first time an outer space creature has viewed my nudity." Forest's heroine eventually crossed over to the U.S. as "adults only" commerce and, four years later, was adapted by director Roger Vadim into a scandalous movie vehicle for Jane Fonda.

Milo Manara is the heir to Forest's "graphic novel" hybridization of sex and science fiction. Born in a small town in Northern Italy, Manara never read a comic book until he was in his twenties. During the 1960s, a youthful Manara—then an art student living in Venice—was caught up in the leftist movement sweeping his native country. But, political polemics notwithstanding, he faced a less philosophical reality...specifically, his own poverty. Manara decided on his development of "reproductibility": if you could create some kind of popular icon, and mass-produce it at minimal expense, success would follow.

He subsequently discovered the work of Hugo Pratt, whom Manara describes as the greatest cartoonist of all time, and Forest's Barbarella. Federico Fellini's films were another significant influence on the artist, who also researched comic strip artists Will Eisner and Frank Frazetta. Manara's own subversive bent was finally manifested in his erotic tableaux: translations of his graphic novels—including the *Battemococh*, *Fantasia*, *Hidden Camera*—have debuted in America via NBM Publishing.

Manara's most popular erotica may be *The Click*, a tale that spawned a couple of sequels, as well as a stage and a movie adaptation, the latter (*LE DECLIC*) released in the U.S. as *THE TURN-ON* (1983). The latest incarnation of the novel is a seven-picture series from Alain Sirtaky, producer of

continued on page 68

Milo Manara's THE CLICK

WILL THIS SCI-FI SPOOF TURN YOU ON? A 3-D TV SERIES, FOR GROWN-UPS, ABOUT AN APHRODISIAC TRANSMITTER.

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

Five years before *SCREAM* debuted, director Rolfé Kanefsky's horror lampoon, *THERE'S NOTHING OUT THERE* (1.3), squeezed smiles from poker-faced critics like Janet Maslin and Kevin Thomas. Kanefsky's '97 agenda includes three episodes of *THE CLICK*. A chance meeting with producer Alain Stritzky, at the American Film Market, prompted his involvement in the series.

"They had several writers on the project but they had some problems getting the tone of the stories," related Kanefsky. "A full-length film called *THE TURN-ON* ('89), which was filmed in New Orleans, very much followed Milo Manara's comic book. It's about a frigid housewife, named Claudia, whose husband is having problems with her. So he hires a doctor who invents this box, which shoots out electrical pulses, and the husband basically uses this box to stimulate his wife. The concept of the new *CLICK* television series is that they use this sort of remote control box that can virtually turn people on."

The sexual intimidation, wielded upon the heroine by the Click, is a darker edge of the comic book which hardly seemed appropriate for the TV series. "We wanted to stay away from that," explained the director. "We don't want to have anything that mentioned rape, or men just using the de-



Adapted from Manara's comic book (p), *THE CLICK* series offers Delphine Ferlic as "Miss Paragoddess" in *Girls of Thunder*, an episode that lampoons *GT*

Body Beautiful. The idea was to set it in a health spa that's having trouble and is going under. They need something to attract customers. They find this box, and they start using it on people as they're working out. The customers think it's the ultimate workout, so the place gets busier and busier. It has an '80s sex comedy feel to it in the tradition of



vote to take advantage of women." Hence, the comic book's central story was deep-seated: surviving the transition to TV were the Click, an aphrodisiac transmitter, and the recurrent character of Dr. Fex. Unlike its utilization in the comic book scenario, the clicker does not require a receiver planted in its recipient's hand. "It goes from hand to hand through different people now," said Kanefsky. "I wrote a half-hour spec which is called *The*

PORKY'S and *WEIRD SCIENCE*. Alain loved that first half hour and, based on that, he wanted it to be the first of the series where they introduce the box and set the tone for the whole series."

Stritzky has tailored a unique marketing tool for his films. There are seven 30-minute movies in the series that can each be divided into three 30-minute segments; hence, syndicators may opt to broadcast the show as a



Dr. Fox (John La Zarr), a recurrent character on *CLICK*, meets the Marquise in the *Balls of Thunder* (left); the hotel maid (right) is also seen in an unwrapped Kim Reed (left), cast as Dominique, the hotel maid (right), in the same episode.

full-length feature or episodic, three-part sitcom. The concept was to create half hour breaks to accommodate neither format.

Abandoning the comic book's misogyny, Kanefsky expanded his original script to a 90-minute feature; the eroticism is intact, but the humor is less dark and tends more to burlesque. He also wrote *Secrets Revealed*, a "best of" revue that stridges the series' most memorable vignettes; a wraparound story was shot for the retrospective. "In order to do this segment," the director recounted, "you have to know the series inside and out. You know what clips to use and everything else that happened in the series. So I was very conscious of the whole structure of the series and how it was going."

Developing tight gags for the series, Kanefsky reconstructed Mannara's Clicker box; it's not just an aphrodisiac, anymore. "Not only can the box turn people on, it can transform a person," the director said with a self-satisfied smile. "There are a couple of other switches on the back. If you push one, it can change a person into a different man or woman. So we've got body switching going on as a sci-fi element and, in my episodes, it can increase or shrink a body part. Due to that, we have some fun things with breasts growing and other bodily parts."

The budget prohibited expensive optical effects. The producers were more inclined to work with a mechanical technology. *The Body Beautiful* provided for-

tile ground for Kanefsky's gags. "We have jokes with things like instant muscles. A guy will be working out and, all of a sudden, his muscles start bulging all over the place. And, naturally, everyone wants to use that machine."

A self-professed "devoted" fan of the genre, Kanefsky didn't neglect the supernatural elements. In *Balls of Thunder*, Dr. Fox and a cadre of archaeologists recover the Clicker in an Egyptian tomb. Fox impulsively turns on the device and aims it at a mummy. Springing to life, the cadaver seductively strips off its bandages to reveal a very well-preserved, voluptuous vixen who lustily gropes one of the attendant scientists. Fox flees the tomb as his competitors volunteer to "research" the specimen, moans of passion echo from the ancient burial chamber. Holy Beatty *1988*.

The "highlight of the series," according to the director, is the *Balls of Thunder* episode which takes place in

ROLFE KANEFSKY

"Akin to PORKY'S and WEIRD SCIENCE, it's '80s sex comedy with horror, fantasy and sci-fi elements."

Prague, Cannes, Monte Carlo, Switzerland and Los Angeles. The tantalizing Tangerina (De'Ann Power), a cuisine owner, abducts European prostitutes in a scheme to hunker the sperm of world leaders. Her goal: world domination via cloning. Yep, it's James Bond buffoonery, with Rod Steele, agent 0014—(got it? He's twice the man 007 is)—combining Prague to investigate the disappearance of hookers. Bell (Sita Thompson), a.k.a. agent 0013, was dispatched to the same location a week earlier but vanished.

Steele checks out a brothel officiated by mesmerizing Madame Greta, played by Michelle Bauer (4:2) with her effortless comic panache. I just couldn't pin down the origin of her accent. "I have Rolfe Kanefsky to thank for that," laughed Bauer. "He wanted Madame Greta to have a German accent. And, as you know, it's not German at all. I kept telling him, 'I can't do an accent and if you make me do this, it's going to be miserable.' But Rolfe insisted and it ended up being more Bela Lugosi more than anything else. A lot of the time, the accent was over the top—and it was in and it was out—but, through editing, it all came together real well."

"Madame Greta was a lot of fun. I was quite thrilled because I'm trying to make this transition away from so much nudity. I'm trying to play character roles, not the young ood or the younger gal, any more. I'm trying to play older roles and making that move in my career. So Madame Greta was perfect. It was one of my first plunges back into my career."

One of the big jokes in *Balls of Thunder* is at the expense of the Cold War. As a result of détente, Steele's agency is suffering serious setbacks; one of the consequences is a deficit of toys and gadgets that were indelibly part of the 007 mythos. There's also a lot of *Ned* magazine humor, with Bond's aliases christened as

Rolfe Kanefsky, one of *CLICK*'s directors, joining the *Power Flower* episode of *BUTTERSCOTCH*, another TV series adapted from a Mike Mannara comic book.



Miss Pennyworth, 'P' and 'O.'

"I'm cast as Pennyworth," smiles Delphine Pacific, a native of Crown Point, Indiana. Pacific plays the sultry sidekick with a sexual edge. Lois Maxwell could only dream of. She drives Steele to the airport and, while waiting in the cocktail lounge, the Clicker is accidentally switched into operation. Pennyworth is impacted by the beam and, suddenly, the staid secretary leaps into a torrid tryst with the bartender.

"That scene should have taken a long time to film," said Pacific. "But the budgets were so low, it was rather difficult. Rolfe wanted me to go on top of the bar, but he didn't want me to break anything and there were things on there that were breakable. It was hard because, when you're supposed to be out of control, you're not thinking. Well, I can't break this or that." What also made it difficult was that the kind of clothing they had on me wasn't the kind you need. Usually, they have tearaways so you can just tear it off very easily. I didn't have that kind of clothing on.

"Then I had to pour water over myself—but the director didn't want me to make a mess! It was like being restricted while, at the same time, you're supposed to be unrestrained. I guess they just couldn't afford to have them break. Normally, I would just push everything off the bar—I wouldn't care. He also didn't want me to get my face wet...I don't know why."

Kanefsky describes the episode as "NUDE BOMB meets CASINO ROY-ALS parody. It probably has some of the most outrageous elements I've ever written in my life. It really goes over the top. Some of the highlights occur in the brothel. Steele has a big fight with this big muscled, male prostitute and they have a dildo duel with these big dildos. Steele finally strangles the guy with a big blow-up doll."

Robert Donovan, cast as Rod Steele, pops-up elsewhere in the series as William Heywood (CLICK episode A), an airline pilot (episode C) and Detective Popper (episode F, *For the Love of Click*). "He's a very excellent actor,"



Michelle Bauer (C) & Agent 0014 (F, Robert Donovan) ignore the unconscious Stan Thompson (B&B). "It's more challenging to do character roles," says Bauer.

said Kanefsky. "He's a good natural comedian. He did a really fine Sean Connery impression as well. Donovan, as Detective Pepper, is hired to get the box back from Dr. Fex. When the box falls into the hands of a painter, Fex and Popper follow her to Hawaii. It's kind of a 'road trip' comedy following the box. It has a '40s noir feel to it. Popper is a 'Sam Spade meets Detective Clauson' character. Scott Kennedy directed that one."

As a poser, the aforementioned Tangerina cameos as Demi Moore, Madonna and Marilyn Monroe. She nurtures a pet snake to complement her Nastassia Kinski impersonation. "Actually, Tangerina has trained this snake to kill women with sexual pleasure," revealed Kanefsky. "Sort of a take-off on the BARRARELLA sex machine."

Discovering that the Clicker can alter body parts as well as arouse libidos, Steele yields to temptation. "I'm also a huge fan of Hong Kong cinema," said Kanefsky. "They're the only people doing these really over-the-top, funny, sexy stories like SEX AND ZEN and CHINESE TORTURE CHAMBER STORY. Steele points it down at his groin and gives himself an 'improvement.' Later on in the story, they've got him cornered. But before they kill him, they want to get a clone of him. In order to get his sperm, they have this electronic sucking device. They pull down his pants and when they discover that he



won't fit, they start fighting over the clicker. He says, 'Quick, point it at me!' Pussy L'Amour, played by Jackie Lovell, is crouched down next to him and, when he gets zapped, all you see is the shadow of his four-foot erection that knocks her unconscious and sends her flying across the room. It's done with Bond music."

Brian Budnik directed *Secrets Revealed*, the final episode written by Kanefsky. Fex is determined to learn the box's secrets by dismantling it. Tracing the Clicker's origins to Haiti, Fex travels to the island where he becomes embroiled with voodoo. "I tried to bring in as many horror, fantasy and sci-fi elements as I could," said Kanefsky, "—and that's on top of what we already had in THE CLICK."

While stories for THE CLICK range all over the world, the production was



Nurse Nathan (Olivia Quintrini) is shocked into a sexual frenzy in *Secrets Revealed*, the final episode which strings together the best vignettes from the series.

essentially L.A. based. During a two month period, a small crew and some actors photographed establishing shots in Niagara Falls, New York, Morocco, Hawaii, Cannes, Prague and Monte Carlo. The colorful locations embellished the illusion of production value, though the schedule was locked into rigid constraints.

A total of seven feature-length CLICK movies accompanied the casting of Hollywood's most beautiful starlets. Gabriella Hill, the "vamp" who fueled NIGHT SHADE (5:1) with bloodlust, was cast in episodes helmed by Kanefsky. "She was a real find," enthused the director. "Gabriella recently had a small spread in Playboy because she was also in their WOMEN: STORIES OF PASSION series. She plays several different characters in my CLICK movies. She played Linda in *The Body Beautiful*, this very spunky gym instructor who works at the spa. Mischievous and

playful, she's the first one to discover the powers of the box. She becomes obsessed, but eventually learns that you don't need mechanical devices to have a good time. In her second CLICK movie, *Balls of Thunder*, Gabriella plays Areola, one of Tangerina's assistants.

"I worked with Jackie Lovell [5:7] twice. She was a lot of fun, great to work with. She was very comfortable with the material. Overall, I think everyone was comfortable with the material because I really insist on a rehearsal period that these women are denied in other films. Even if the sex and nudity is great, it's hell to sit through unfunny comedy. I really wanted to work with all the actors and actresses to get the situations right. Jackie was in *The Body Beautiful*. She played an assistant to the woman who is trying to take over the spa. At one point, she breaks into the spa to break the equipment and is clicked by the box. Jackie was very good in sex scenes with other women. She's got that down pretty good. She's in the James Bond one too, playing Pussy L'Amour. I'd say 'Okay, Jackie, in this scene you get together with the snake' and she'd say, 'Cool!' She had a really good time with it all."

An actress visible in almost every episode, though usually cast in minor roles, is Stacey Leigh Mobley who played an alluring alien in the EM-MANUELLE series (5:9), also produced by Alain Siritaky. The actress has just finished the lead role in STRIPTEASER II. "Stacey had just wrapped STRIPTEASER II when we hired her," recounted Kanefsky. "Alain describes her as having the perfect breasts. She was in three of my CLICK movies. She plays a woman who gets turned on in the sauna and has a sex scene there. At one point, the clicker gets hooked into the electrical system and everything goes crazy. People who

ROLFE KANEFSKY

"Jacqueline Lovell was great to work with. She was very good in sex scenes with other women."

turn on the hand dryer in the bathroom gets zapped by the clicker. It gets into the boom box, the intercom system. In the James Bond one, she has a very funny part in the beginning..."

Mobley picked up the Bond story: "I'm sitting in a pool, and my evil gangster stepdad is talking on the phone. I jump out of the pool and a little quacking duck shows up. My stepdad reads four words that have been inscribed on the duck's wing: 'Your goose is cooked.' And then it explodes. All of a sudden, Rod Steele pops out of the pool in a tuxedo with a scuba mask on. You see his face and a cigarette pops out of his mouth: he lights it and pulls off the scuba mask. I ask, 'Who are you?' and he says, 'Steele... Rod Steele, 0014.' I'm like, 'Oh my God! I want him.' But as he starts coming towards me, I start masturbating. I close my eyes, and all these benches start coming down on him. I'm getting myself off and, by the time that I'm done, he's done with the benches and I'm like, 'Okay, that's enough for me. Maybe next time, big boy.'"

Naked heroines are a snap for Mobley. "That's easy," she giggled. "I'm a nudist. I like being naked. I look good." She was also featured in THE NATURAL, a series tailored for The Playboy Channel. "There were about twenty girls who were so gorgeous in that. They took twenty of the most beautiful, natural women they could find in

America and we did a bunch of sequences for the three or four hour episodes..."

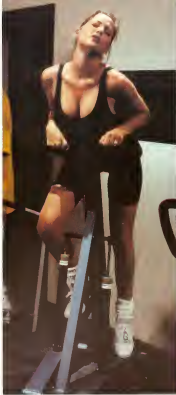
Kanefsky cut-in with an encore speech regarding rehearsals as an expedient antidote to stressful sex scenes: "I discussed it with the actors because there's a tendency, especially when you're doing low budget and quick productions, to wing it on the set. A lot of times, actors and actresses don't know, or haven't even met each other before going into the love-making scenes. Some people feel uncomfortable in

In pursuit of Dr. Paz, officers Kevin R. West & Jennifer Santos are "clicked" into distraction by the sexual additive in the *Sensual Independence Day* episode.



those situations. Some people don't want to be touched some places and other things like that. I found it a lot better to discuss all this ahead of time so, going in, everyone knew exactly what was expected. There are no surprises. If you do it the other way, sometimes the actors feel pressured as they go along with it and, afterwards, are miserable or get upset which never happened even once on this series. I just choreographed the scenes and went over it with the actors. I asked their input—what they thought would be good—and I tried to make the sex scenes a little different, because there were actually a fair amount of them over the course of the entire series.

"For instance, in the health spa, there's not one sex scene in the bedroom. I thought, *'Been there, seen that, let's find more interesting places.'*" So with all the gym equipment and things like that, we didn't need the



L: Gabrielle Hall is in *The Hot Chick*; T. Sassy Leigh Hobley, a recurrent presence in the series, is *The Body Beautiful*. R: See the show, read the sequel.

bedroom. We had sex scenes in some alleys, in the flower shop on a bed of soil...just anywhere to make it a little bit more interesting and exotic. One of the better sex scenes in the series was in *CLICK*'s 'A' episode—it's the scene where three people break into the spa to destroy the equipment and get clicked. One was Jackie Lovell, another was an actress named Kiya and her boyfriend Rick Jordan. Jackie's character is more into women, so when they get clicked, she and the guy are

sort of fighting over the girl. Jackie keeps pushing him away and he keeps trying to get in during the scene. It's funny and entertaining, as well as very sexy at the same time. You're not just watching the same old hump and grind.

"The series is very much a comedy and, if the film has to stop dead for an erotic scene, it's really hard to balance the humor. That was one of the tricky things about the series, to incorporate the lovemaking and the nudity into

the humor of the piece. It kept pushing the story forward."

Similar to last year's EM-MANUELLE and JUSTINE series, *THE CLICK* was partially shot in 3-D. Kanefsky navigated his camera to fabricate a depth of field: "You need a lot of foreground elements to create that third dimension. So you need a room big enough to have the actors and a lot of props and set decoration—as well as space for the steadicam, which shoots almost all of the 3-D sequences. The camera travels around in the circle."

Tired of the clichéd, inanimate objects that have popped off 3-D screens since the early '50s, Kanefsky opted—on borrowed time—to try another application. "I was really fighting the entire time to try and get the actors to come through in 3-D. In my opinion, when you watch these 3-D scenes, what do you want to see? Do you want to see plants in your face...or



would you want to see the actor's hair flying in the camera, and their chest and stuff like that. So we built a rotating bed, where we screwed the camera onto it so the actors themselves were actually rotating around the room. They became the foreground elements. They're actually the ones in 3-D. So, that way, you have the actors more in your face. That was very hard to do and done only once in this series, but it looked very good."

Manara Mesclames DE'ANN POWER

AS A SEXY SCHIZOPHRENIC, THE EROTIC THRILLER DIVA
CLICKS AS MADONNA, DEMI MOORE, JANET JACKSON...

By DAN SCAPPEROTT

The acting bug's bite proved infectious. As a juvenile, the "San Fernando Valley girl" organized backyard pageantry with her brother; neighbors paid a quarter at the gate for "box seats" which faced a blanket that had been tossed over a clothesline. De'Ann Power, the star of the show, was relief from the heat and stale summer reruns.

The aspiring actress expanded her acting range by enrolling in acting classes at high school and Valley College. Matter of fact, Power continues to train at the Beverly Hills Playhouse.

Supporting Cynthia Rothrock, she made her film debut in 24 HOURS TILL MIDNIGHT, directed by Leo Fong, the chop-socky saga was shot in Malaysia. Power subsequently appeared in a string of erotic thrillers (MIDNIGHT CONFESSIONS, NAKED INSTINCT, et al.) and burlesque tailored for the video market (SEX AND THE SINGLE ALIEN, ASSAULT OF THE PARTY NERDS II). She also sampled the TV medium with stints on NYPD BLUE, the Playboy Channel's DIVORCE LAW and CANDY CRACKER PI, the latter a black-out comedy for adults.

She breached the sci-fi genre with Michael Meyer's NIGHT REALM (1995), a futuristic tale where conditions dictate a subterranean existence. Kathy Showers, an erotic thriller vet, was cast as "the princess of good. They had an evil princess of darkness. I was



Real on world conquest, Power's villain impersonates Demi Moore.

one of Kathy's main warriors."

One year later, Power's screen visibility expanded in STORMY NIGHTS, a vehicle for another erotic thriller sovereign: "I play the secretary of Shannon Tweed's husband. I start finding out that there is a woman who has come into their lives, she's trying to take over all their possessions, their identity and then get rid of them. Three quarters of the way through the film, I wind up getting killed."

Cast in THE CLICK, a series adapt-

ed from Milo Manara's comic book about aphrodisiacal technology, Power was offered the opportunity to play several femmes rolled into one. Her character, a casino owner named Tangorina, has a penchant for posing as celebrities and strategizing world conquest. In the Bells of Thunder episode, a spoof of the James Bond canon, agent Red Steele circumvents Tangorina's diabolical scheme to dominate the earth; her powers are prosthetics. "As Tangorina, I impersonate Marilyn Monroe with the wind coming up the dress," recounted Power, "—and Nastassja Kinski laying out nude with the snake across her. I wish we had more time or more money to actually create this stuff, and really work it out, before hitting the set. Every morning, we'd show up and really started creating the character—right there on the set!—without any tests or supervision."

Day #1 on the set: Power was transformed into Demi Moore's Vainly Fair cover, the one that unnerved censors (i.e. Moore wore only a straight from a business suit was painted on her nude physique). "My own hair is long and blonde," said Power, "however, De'Ann Power never shows in Tangorina. I had short, black hair the first day of shooting and the only thing I was wearing was a pair of high heels. The body painting took eight hours. Unbelievable, I couldn't sit down. I had to stand in the room, with my legs spread and my arms up, and just let him work. I asked them to paint my back last, so I could lean up against the



Wielding the flicker, Power is mesmerizing as Marilyn Monroe in *THE CLICK*'s *Balls of Thunder* episode: "I play Marilyn with the wind coming up the dress" (homage to M's classic *SEVEN YEAR ITCH* ensemble).

wall.

"Normally, you're on the set and you get to meet the other actors or do a table reading. But the body painting took so long, I never saw the set until I went to do the scene. They had gone ahead and shot the whole scene from my POV, as well as the two closeups, without me...and then I came out body painted.

"In the opening of the scene, I'm striking the *Vanity Fair* pose. The funny part was that the guy had done such a great job on the body painting, that the front shot did not reveal that I was actually nude! They had to do a slow motion camera shot, up and down my body, to see the nipple and make audiences realize I had no clothes on!"

The scene makes the transition to *DR. NO* homage: Tangarina struts into her fabulous gambling casino and seats herself at a poker table. "I'm interested in Rod Steele, the 007 character," said Power, "because I have this lust for ruling the world, and he has the chick hex which can control people. I feel that if I have this in my possession,

I can control the world. So, Tangarina feels that if she can clone presidents and heads of countries—and get rid of the real ones—she'll control everything. She also has her prostitutes, who go out with all these guys and collect their sperm and bring it back to the laboratory so they can make clones. It's really a fun, over-the-top script."

Power also embodied Nastassja Kinski's chic pinup: "I was totally nude, my hair slicked back like it was wet, lying with this enormous python. It was the largest snake I've ever touched, and I haven't touched that many. This snake, which had to be 7-8 feet straight across, was laid on me at the beginning of the scene like the *Kinski* picture. As soon as they'd called 'rolling,' the snake—every single time—slithered off me and lunged towards the camera. I think it was the heat from the group of people there. That thing was so long that, even when it reached the camera, it was still on me. They weren't getting too much variety out of him."

DE'ANN POWER

"We'd create the character on the set without tests or supervision. I wish we had more money."

The actress was also cosmetically incarnated as "believe it or not, Janet Jackson," laughed Power. "It was a white Janet Jackson. They had turned my hair brown and done it in ringlets. It's the famous pose where she has jeans on, and no top, and her hands are relaxed on top of her head and male hands are cupping her breasts. The artist had just gotten his palettes out, and was about to start painting me, when someone knocked at the door. So the door opens and I'm standing there with my hands up, getting ready to be body painted; then the artist raced behind me, to cover my breasts, while I took care of business."

Cameouflaged as Madonna, the disguise required Power to wear a black-shaded, completely transparent body suit. Her pose replicated a famous photo of the singer that stressed a stage chair and cleavage.

"It was wonderful," said Power, reflecting on the *CLICK* experience. "The fun part was that Rolfé Kamefsky, the director and writer, was so great. Every time I went over to him to see if he needed anything else, he'd just say, 'You're doing great. Just keep having fun.' That was his direction. He was under a lot of pressure and had to keep things moving along very quickly."

THE CLICK and *BUTTER-SCOTCH* had a lot in common, same producer (Alain Sirtisky), both series were often helmed by the same director (Kamefsky), some source material

Another camouflage: Power embodies Nastassja Kinski's pinup. "It was the largest snake—I to 8 ft. across—I've ever touched, and I haven't touched that many."





Power is juicy as Janet Jackson's pin-up (spoiled on PPV's 2-D front cover). "It's very multidimensional. My Tengerina role expresses 4 or 5 or 7 attitudes."

(more erotic fantasy from comic book scribe, Milo Manara)—and De'Ann Power, who crossed over into the latter series about a hot-to-trot invisible man. In one episode, she plays Dr. Glucose, a proctologist who doesn't adhere to the Hippocratic oath. "A girl comes into the doctor's office," Power explained, "and tells her about a friend who has a problem. In character as the medic, I'm listening intently and she proceeds to tell me that this friend of hers is invisible, and is sitting in a

chair next to her. Of course, I think she's crazy—until he starts talking and I realize that someone really is there. I tell her that she should leave the room, so I can a better look at this person. I start taking advantage of him sexually, and I make love to the invisible man. After we're done, I tell him how much I've enjoyed it and invite him back."

She recalls that the special effects required only a string attached to the bottom of the the invisible man's chair, which roils

back when he's supposed to stand erect. The examining table was also rigged with wires; when the invisible guy seats himself on the surface, a pull on the wire leaves a sinking impression on the upholstery.

"In another episode, I play a frustrated librarian who also finds out that there are a lot of strange things happening," Power continued. "I notice that when people sit in this particular chair within the library, they jump right out of it. After everyone's gone, I start feeling around in this chair and feel there's a man there! I haven't had a good time in a while, so I decide to take advantage of the situation. As I'm getting into it, one of the girls walks in and starts asking me what I'm doing. I jump up and tell myself that I've got to go get a life. I had to balance myself there to show that there was some distance between me and the invisible man's lap."

The good natured eroticism of both series called for extensive nudity. While this caused little concern for "Most of us have done it before," said a nonplussed Power, "so we already knew what to expect. There are ways of covering certain areas, which won't be seen by the camera, but will give you a little more confidence to get through the scene without feeling completely exposed. Wardrobe helps you out with those little things...very little things, I might add. They're just little patches that we get, and then the gentlemen get naked. Most people prefer just that little extra bit. It kind of gives you the confidence that accidents might not happen. You won't be totally revealed."

The lack of preproduction rehearsal notwithstanding, Power gauges Tengerina as her "most challenging role to date" because "I was not taking on just one character. I was taking on a CLICK character that had four or five or seven different sides and attitudes. The drive and the reason for the char-

DE'ANN POWER

"I was nude, lying with this enormous python. When they'd say 'Roll,' it'd lunge toward the camera."

acter's fulfillment is to rule the world. How much more insane can you get? It's very multidimensional. I wish I had more time with the Demi Moore scene, because there was so much going on it that."

Tangerina, who engages in an intense card game with superspy Rod Steele, is "clucked" into a sexual delirium. "I still want to keep the game going because I'm focused on finding out what Steele is up to. But I'm getting turned-on, and I'm still in this card game. So, in the middle of this, I wind up in a frenzy and have an orgasm! After the orgasm, I take my drink, put it between my legs and as I gasp a sigh of relief—"Ahhhh"—you'll see a cloud of steam rise from under my side of the table. That one was really over the top and great fun."

Power recently played a predator in Century Film Partners' erotic thriller, *PASSION FOR MURDER*. "I play a centerfold who feels wronged," she smiled. "I go around killing the publisher, editor and the owner of the magazine. The police question me and I ask them if they have considered the wife, because the man who owns the magazine is divorced. So they think it's her and, at the end of the film, they kill me. So I end up getting killed in that one, too! The energy on that one was very sensual and very aggressive. At the end, I'm pistol whipping the guy who owns the magazine. I'm getting ready to kill him when they burst into the room and wind up having to kill me."

Didn't take long for Power to acclimate herself to the firepower. She's no stranger to guns, what with a family nestled in Oklahoma: "We used to go hunting, and all of that, when I was very small. I later went over to the Beverly Hills Gun Club and fooled around with some pistols several years ago. So, when it came time to do the scene, I was very comfortable just using the hand gun, flipping it around and putting the bullets in. Drawing from the past." □

Power incarnated as CLICK's Medorine: "I never saw the movie set and I went out there to do a scene. Wish I had more time with the Demi Moore gig."



Milo Manara's BUTTERSCOTCH

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS VANISHES IN A 3-D SERIES,
GEARED FOR CABLE, ABOUT AN INVISIBLE MAN: COMEDY ENSUES.

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

Comic book artist Milo Manara, whose proclivities lean toward erotic fantasy, dropped the "invisible man" formula into a graphic novel setting. The result was *Butterscotch*, the tale of a physics professor who accidentally discovers an ointment that renders him completely transparent. He exploits this freedom to stalk Beatrice, a famous prima ballerina and an all-around bitch. Beatrice's lovely secretary, Honey, as all too cognizant of the peeping tom's existence; but every time she tries to validate his presence, Honey suffers more pitfalls than Chevy Chase. Telltale evidence of the invincible professor's corporeality can be traced to the scent of butterscotch—the taffee served as the nontoxic base for his invisibility serum.

Almost a decade ago, producer Alain Siritsky acquired the rights to *The Chick*, Manara's comic book about a mechanical device that discharges aphrodisiac beams, whenever it's aimed at it is whipped into a sexual frenzy. Siritsky hired the artist as production designer for *LE DÉCLIC* (1989), the film adaptation of Manara's comic book which director Jean-Louis Richard shot in New Orleans (padding the running time with nude starlets). Roger Corman released the film in America as *THE TURN-ON*.

Siritsky subsequently tapped into



Roll, played by Gisele Hall (l) with Gary Puck on a series, in "Security Guard" on the Honey Innense that Manara created for his Butterscotch comic book (r)

Manara's *Butterscotch* because "I always liked his erotic series involving the invisible man. I thought that it was a great concept. As a matter of fact, I made a deal with Milo to produce a film that was based on the comic book—and Milo Manara was supposed to direct it! We decided that the film would be shot in the north of Italy, in the area where the comic book originated. We scouted for locations. There are those big lakes and it's a beautiful

setting."

A crews were hired in Rome and Northern Italy, but Manara wasn't ready. "Let's say that, as a director, Manara was not fully confident in himself," explained Siritsky. "He also wanted to move more in the direction of the man who inspired him, his friend Federico Fellini, who was giving him advice on how to shoot the



movie."

Fellini's contributions, however, would have inflated the budget beyond its modest restrictions. "It wasn't going exactly in the direction of the film we wanted to make," said Siritsky, "so I made a deal with Manara. I told him if he could find another producer, he could make the movie providing the producer used Manara as a director. That deal was in place for several years, while he was looking for a pro-



Outlines from the White House coffee tables? It's BUTTERSCOTCH's isotactic versus *Am Not a Ghost*: Kim Cattrall, Stacey Leigh Mabley, Thana Maria & Kyle Hunter get opened by the invisible Man.

ducer who would accept him to direct the movie. All of them backed out and, many years later, I re-acquired the rights to that comic book. Manara accepted the fact that we would write seven different stories and he would not be directing any of them."

Fast forward to 1997, a total of seven, 90-minute BUTTERSCOTCH films are in the can, each photographed with Siritzky's trademark 3-D gimmickery, previously utilized for his CLICK, EM-MANUELLE, and JUSTINE television series. "As these seven films are derived from the comic books, which are erotic and funny, we wanted both those elements in the film," Siritzky advised. "We also wanted the invisible man as the lead character through the entire series. I selected the writers and directors, and I participated in the casting of the series and I produced the series. Like our other series, this was also shot all over the world. It's very international programming. It takes place in many countries."

A trio of writers set to work adapting the comic books. One went the unattractive, nutty professor and in stepped Norman Parent, an out of work actor. While entering a Hollywood party at a producer's home, Norman—fotching wine from the cellar—accidentally splashes himself with a mysterious elixir left over from an old movie called THE INVISIBLE WORLD OF WALTER SINCLAIR. To Norman's chock, he slowly turns invisible. He confides his secret to the lovely Kelli Parkinson, an actress he meets at

the party. Robert Bull, Kelli's sleazy ex-agent, also discovers the formula and conspires to turn invisible in a scheme to torment Kelli.

When Norman doesn't do his "vanishing act," he approximates visibility with body paint or encasing the old Claude Rains routine (i.e. wearing handglasses). But the drawbacks of his "transparency" eventually overshadow his voyeurism, prompting him to quip, "As an actor I've heard of low profile. But no profile!"

Several writers and directors were brought onto the project. One of them, Ralf Kanefsky, had helmed and written several episodes of the producer's other Manara series, THE CLICK. "Coming from Europe, I'm very director-oriented, very script-oriented," Siritzky said. "Ralf is a young director who is extremely talented. There is no question that making a film erotic is doing something that belongs to a certain genre, but it still requires the talents of a writer and director...and you still have to be able to tell a story, and

ALAIN SIRITZKY

"As a director, Manara wasn't ready. He wanted to be like his friend & inspiration, Federico Fellini."

supervise the postproduction and all the elements that go into making a normal mainstream movie. I think it's a very good training for a director like Ralf Kanefsky.

"We are now moving into more mainstream products, including film and TV series, because Ralf has many great ideas. He's very prolific. We have another series in pre-production called MR. STEELE which derives from his work with us on THE CLICK (see page 36). This will be a mainstream series with no sex, but a lot of beautiful girls. It will be much more expensive with more action and mainstream stories."

Globally marketed, the series has a distinctively continental flavor. In the first episode, Norman and Kelli travel to England. Thereafter, their adventures take them to France, Africa, Germany, Italy and Morocco. Second unit crews were dispatched to the various countries for pickup and establishing shots.

A mini-repertoire of bombshells has accumulated with Siritzky's expanding industry. Among the more prominent players: Sita Thompson (5-7), Gabriella Hall, Kira Reed (5-10), Leslie Ollivan, Deanne Power, Kim Dawson and the indomitable Michelle Bauer (4-8).

"Michelle plays an actress, Amanda Blackwell, a takeoff on Sharon Stone, who's working on this film called AFTER LIFE," said Kanefsky. "Matter of fact, we cast her in the very first episode, *Lost But Found*. Michelle did slapstick, which was a lot of fun and she was great at it. She had one love scene in BUTTERSCOTCH when she's in Morocco, a complete takeoff on the opening scene in BASIC INSTINCT. This sex scene happens in the flower shop with a garden tool."

Bauer describes her character as "an actress who is very stuck up and snooty. Amanda is absolutely awful. There's this great scene at dinner, where the invisible man repeatedly smashes my face into this garden salad

It's about Shemp & sex. During a rehearsal for the Power Flower episode, director Ralf Kanefsky instructs Gabriella Hall on "how to get a pie in the face."





Cable queens Nina Reed & Angeli Cornelli make love to the invisible Men in *Power Flower*. "Kiss is very funny, she's deersie but own sitcom," enthuses the director.

with blue cheese dressing. Relfe writes very funny stuff, and I just had a lot of laughs working with him.

"Then there was the *Power Flower* episode where I have a 3-D love scene with Robert Donovan in a Moroccan flower shop. It was comical and fun. I kind of made a stretch playing Amanda but it felt right. I'm usually playing the seductress, not usually the snooty, two-bit bussy. It was a stretch but it was funny and it came across very well.

"Robert Donovan is so wonderful in *BUTTERSCOTCH*. He plays this French actor named Maurice and he's biting on everyone, all the time, and is always getting burned down. When I was working with Relfe, I said, 'If I have a love scene with anybody, I'd love to have it be with Robert Donovan, he's just so fantastic.'

So he paired us up together. Robert's character has this fantasy about making love in a flower shop amongst the flowers. So what does Relfe do? He gets us bags of fertilizer. We were calling it 'dirt.' So he has us rubbing this fertilizer all over each other, and then making love in it. It was absolutely gritty, but it looks really good. When I'm finally on top in my moment of passion, I'm to murder him in this soap opera that a film crew is shooting. I'm grating in co-

stasy and I reach behind to grab a weapon to stab him, and it ends up to be only a plastic shovel. I stare at it in disbelief as if to say 'Are you kidding?'

Gabriella Hall as "erotic thriller" veteran (*MASSEUSE 2*, *SEXUAL ROULETTE*, et al) and recurrent player on Showtime's *WOMEN: STORIES OF PASSION*, appears in four episodes as Kelli Parkinson. Serving as Norman's love interest, Kelli is an aspiring actress who's resisting the old "casting couch" pitches. The character is loosely based on the 'Honey' heroine in Manana's comic book. Travelling to Morocco, Kelli and Norman locate an exotic flower that turns out to be a genie's domicile. The genie is obligated grant Norman and the actor requests "visibility."

"It's a Monkey's Paw type of story," said Kanefsky, "where the flower or

the genie gets passed around to different people in the crew and the cast, and they all get their wishes; but, of course, none of the wishes come out the way each wisher speculates. Kelli accidentally crushes the flower, thus destroying the genie's home. The genie says, 'If you don't find me a new place to live, I'm going to find one myself!' and she says, 'Fine, fine. Be it.' Later on in the story, she's rehearsing a scene with an actor who rubs one of her breasts three times. Suddenly, smoke starts pouring out of the nipple and out comes the genie saying, 'I'm the genie of the left breast, how may I serve you?'

Judy (Janine Stillo), hired as a makeup woman on the film-within-a-film, is unable to experience orgasm...until she's acquainted with the

genie. "But the girl starts having nonstop orgasms," related Kanefsky. "Another victim of the genie is a girl who wishes to be beautiful: the genie grants her request. The only problem is that she asks for breasts that would make Pamela Anderson look like Olive Oyl. So her breasts start growing and don't stop. There's a very funny scene where she struggles to leave a public place as her ballooning breasts start punching everybody in the face and knocking everything

Julia Rivers, as a receptionist, in an impassioned tryst with the invisible guy; the episode, *Last But Not Least* is homage to Sergio Argento & Italian zombie pic.





Delphine Paoletti (3), cast in *THE CLICK*, is featured in *BUTTERSCOTCH*'s *New Flower* 8 in episode (3).



over. She finally topples down in the bathroom where the genre yells, "Timber!" I was trying to think of all the outrageous things one could do, and go for broke. I've seen all the erotic shows on late night cable, and they all run into each other. You think, "What can I do to make them different? These are really madcap."

"Actually, I thought a lot of the characters were very Disney in flavor, especially the one with the genre: I really went after an ALADDIN type of feel. If you're open to sex, then some of these are sex films for the entire family. They're really light hearted. A lot of slapstick. It's like Disney with nudity and sex."

Kanefsky's homage to horror films is manifested in the *Lost But Found* episode: Norman and Kelli cruise to Italy, the site of a horror film starring pompous Amanda Blackwell. "Norman tumbles upon the set of this Italian horror/

zombie/sex film which is sort of a tribute to all my favorite Dario Argento films," recounted Kanefsky. "Specifically, I did a take off on *CEMETERY MAN* (DELLAMORTE DELLAMORTE). We have the Italian director and Italian crew on a set that would do Ed Wood proud. It ends with a fight between two invisible men."

While the effects were shot on a shoestring budget, a little ingenuity went a long way. "We had a special effects group who worked closely with the directors," said Siritzky. "I also came up with a few ideas of my own. We had a very creative crew working on the special effects. Rolfe Kanefsky also had the idea to hire a professional mime to train the actors to interact with an invisible man. It was a very good idea which proved to be very effective. We have some very funny sequences with a good invisible man and a bad invisible man."

Kanefsky admits that he "knew *THE CLICK* was going to be tricky but *BUTTERSCOTCH* was next to impossible; nevertheless, we did pull it off. We did a lot of wire effects and opticals with dissolving away. We did a lot of second unit stuff and had a lot of things floating around. Of course, we had the standard dresses popping open and skirts rising up by themselves. Beds were rigged so that indentations could be seen, emulating the presence of the invisible man. For some of the sex scenes, a technique with air hoses was used on the women to simulate Norman's unseen hands caressing their breasts and pectorals plates indicating Norman's body pressing against them."

An Arabian Nights setting concludes *Power Flower* as Norman and Kelli make love while sailing over the cities of the world on a flying carpet. "We had to build this whole flying carpet rig which was tricky and it was also a 3-D scene," said Kanefsky. "It had

ROLFE KANEFSKY

"Some of these are sex films for the family: lighthearted, lots of slapstick...Disney with nudity & sex."

to be a whole dome type of set, specially made for the night sky—with floating clouds and branches underneath for the foreground elements—as the carpet moved back and forth with the wind machine blowing to create the whole illusion. Very ambitious. It's not only a carpet but a magical, vibrating, flying carpet."

Jennifer Burton, an erotic thriller diva (*WATCH ME, ILKOT EPISODE 2*) who signed-up for three episodes, praised the crew's compromises with the budget: "We had the best time on second unit when we were filming such invisible tricks like my skirt flying off, or the scene where yours truly, as Dr. Katya Fels, is telling the invisible Norman to cough while I'm holding his balls. The second unit director and all these guys were just so much fun. We had this thing where we would call each other Pig Fuckers. So I want to say that the second unit are Pig Fuckers. The special effects were real hokey but there is one where I'm wearing a skirt. They rigged the skirt with a fishing line tied to it and the skirt is just taped on me. It's not buttressed—so then they pull and it flies off."

Kira Reed and Angela Cornell are united with the invisible man for a ménage à trois. Reed, a cable queen whose roles include a "bloodsucking Betty Boop" on the cancelled *PERVERSIONS OF SCIENCE* series, also plays a distaff gent. "Her performance showed me that Kira really deserves

her own sitcom series," continued Kanefsky, "because she'd be a perfect sitcom actress. Very funny."

In *Butterscotch Over Berlin*, the series takes another page from H.G. Wells when Norman is transported back to Nazi Germany via time machine. The story opens with our hero being unceremoniously dumped out of an airplane. Fortunately, a convenient barn breaks his fall and he is rescued by a trio of French sisters (Melodi Clark, Janine Stillo and the aforemen-

Robert Dawson & Michelle Rusk in the finale to *Power Flower*'s "Jettison" scene. "I don't usually play the innie-bell bunny, but it was fun," says Rusk.



tioned Jennifer Burton, the latter also known as Leigh Anne Garrett): each of the siblings has a secret twist with Norman, who's trying to obtain the mystical Tiara Of Templar that was once owned by Bathsheba.

"I play Dominique," said Burton, "and we all had to have French accents for those parts. It was really, really hard. We would rehearse and rehearse and they'd keep saying we want more of a French accent. It's really confusing because what you think sounds French may not be French enough for somebody else. I'm from Atlanta, so it sounds like a French accent with a Southern accent. I really didn't like that part too much because I thought it was too silly. I like to be serious or really bitchy, the nice girl or the dark."

Burton also admitted she was hardly receptive to twenty crew members congregating on the set while she was simulating an impassioned scene with the invisible man: "We all had a love scene with the invisible Norman, so you're having sex with something that isn't even there. You just feel so stupid, you can't wait for them to call cut."

"Furthermore, I don't like to do nude scenes. I choose not to do it anymore, unless they're paying me a lot of money or it's a SAG film, because you're more protected that way. On a nonunion film, you get nervous that something is showing that's not supposed to be showing—like your privates. All of a sudden, you go in to do the looping and you see that there you are, on the screen, in all your glory. They said that was not going to be shown and then you see it. Now it's too late—you're already on film. It's been kind of a hard lesson for me to learn."

Leslie Oliveran has a hell with the role of Wilhelmene Van Krupp, a treacherous Nazi agent who's competing for the Tiara. Norman also meets Helena Reiss (Christal Chazan), a resistance fighter trying to get the sacred crown so evil may be vanquished (it turns out that Helena is actually Bathsheba).



Dannah Boone (B), also cast in Siritsky's *JUSTINE*, is a Catholic schoolgirl tempted by an invisible creep in *Battercock Sunday*.

The two invisible men duke it out in *Battercock Sunday*. It all starts with Norman confiding his travails to Hillary (Tiffany Turner), a trusted psychotherapist who promptly spills her guts to arch feminist Gretchen (Be Zena). Plotting revenge against Norman and Kelli, an invisible Robert Bull attacks Gretchen, and several other feminists, while framing the invisible Norman. Meanwhile, Bull—the very embodiment of Hollywood's casting couch—has withdrawn Samantha Elder from a seminary school and fled to Las Vegas. Madam Nirvana steps in

to help Norman.

Directed by Scott Kennedy, the lovely Dannah Boone—star of Siritsky's *JUSTINE* series—played Samantha. "She plays a sort of wholesome Catholic school girl who gets initiated into sex by the evil invisible man who goes wild in an all-girls Catholic school," said Kanefsky. "This is the dark episode of the series. If we haven't offended everyone, this episode will do it." Norman is having an affair with eccentric Dr. Katya Fels in the fifth entry, *I Am Not a Ghost*. Fels is doing research into the Sexual Reproduction of drosses and has the odd habit of becoming sexually aroused whenever she hears the words "Nobel Prize." She decides that an invisible man is her ticket on the road to Stockholm.

"That was my favorite one," said Jennifer Burton, "because my character, Doctor Fels, was a real bitch and I played it well. The director kept saying, 'Don't yell so much.' It's because I was such a bitch inside. I would be yelling at the person with whom I was play-



ing opposite and really get mad at them. It was hard for me to let go of that character when the day was done. When you act like a bitch all day, you go home and you're still a bitch. I don't get out of character very well. I liked that bitchiness and, 'You're stupid and I'm not attitude. Just taking men and doing whatever I want with them.'

"A lot of people didn't know how to take me on the set because I come off as, I guess, a bitch. But I'm not really a bitch. I'm nice. I think maybe I do it to get attention. I get really irritated fast. I don't have any patience. We worked



Gabriel Byrne is the prisoner of Scooter (Jonny Lee Miller) in *Mission: Impossible*. The episode overlaps with *Murphy's* other series, *THE CLICK*. A villain seeks world domination by electronically manipulating emotion.

twelve hours every day. We had one director, I won't say his name, who would just do a scene over and over and just beat it into the ground and I'm getting cranky."

The series' recurrent, supportive player is Kim Dawson, who was cast as flaky psychic, Madame Nirvana. "When I read the script it was tremendously funny," said Dawson, a filmmaker in her own right. "They let me take risks, they let me add lines, they let me do whatever I wanted to do. Madame Nirvana has a wild imagination and she gives people these little chocolate pills which are aphrodisiacs. She uses them to put people into trances."

Nevertheless, Dawson admits that the Madame initially reverberated a sour note. But director Kanefsky addressed the actress with some counsel: "He came over to me and said, 'Kim, you have to act like Ethel Merman.' I said 'Who is Ethel Merman?' I didn't know who Ethel Merman was. So he started mimicking Ethel Merman. Then I started doing that, and going over the top on everything. But if I ever do her again, I'll go even further. She's viceroy over the top. Beyond all limits. They liked her so much they kept bringing Madame Nirvana back."

Tallying over 35 film credits, Dawson is no stranger to nudity but, in the *Butterscotch* Sunday episode, she was challenged by the screen lover who wasn't there: "Dawson Boon: and I had to stop ourselves from cracking up. If the guy's

there, it's a lot easier to do the simulation of the sex act. If he's not there, what do you do? You can't even hide your own self. A lot of times, when you're doing a love scene, the reason that you're able to be so free is because you've got the man there and you can press him up against you and you can fake a lot of it. But when he's not there, you can't fake it. When there's nothing there, you have to really try to feel it inside yourself. We created it inside our heads and Dawson and I would just laugh. We'd look at each other, all of a sudden, because we'd both be doing the same thing in trying to create this thing which wasn't there. It's kind of funny. Actually Scott Kennedy, the director, would be real specific. I liked his direction. He would say, 'Here, take your hand and do this in the air' and he'd show us. So that was good."

"A lot of times, when you're doing love scenes on a movie, the mood changes but on the *BUTTERSCOTCH* and *THE CLICK* series it wasn't like

JENNIFER BURTON

"They said it would not show. But you do the looping and see yourself, in all your glory, on-screen."

that. They treated the love scenes just like the other acting scenes which made it a better environment for everybody. Everybody felt comfortable. I worked on a lot of films, and the atmosphere always changes whenever the love scenes start. But not on these. I only speak highly of them."

Dawson plays dual roles in the *I Am Not a Ghost* episode. Landing in Paris for an "Alchemists, Impostors and Frauds" conclave, Norman and Dr. Katya Fels meet Dawson's "Madame Nirvana." Later, following a clue, they travel south to Nice where they encounter Jacques Gervais, a doctor who has traced the secret of invisibility to a Medieval alchemist. A flashback to the alchemist's past reveals that his lover, Merle, was sentenced to a convent by her own family. Dawson plays Sister Julia Compensation, one of four women who are cloistered within the clerical dwelling. The actress sought to cosmetically transform herself into the polar opposite of Nirvana. "I put my hair back real tight and I looked different—I don't really look like Madame Nirvana. Sister Compensation is kind of the bad element of the nuns. She's the one that really wants to do something, the first opportunity she gets is when this invisible man shows up at the convent. When he gets there, everyone is freaked out but I say, 'I'll just take him to my room and figure this situation out.'"

"But he won't do anything. I try to get him to do something, but he won't, which is kind of rare in a guy. Shtit happens. Then Merle gets him to have an orgy with all the nuns on a big table. At that point, he becomes visible; maybe that's what happens when he gets really excited." The youthful Kyle Hunter has appeared in three of the *BUTTERSCOTCH* episodes: cast as Merle, she not only makes love to the invisible alchemist but had no complications about shelling Kim Dawson, Stacey Leigh Mobley and Thera Harris in

The invisible guy seduces Gabriel Byrne in her dreamtime. "We did lots of wire. The director popping up and shifts rising up by themselves," says the director.





Leslie Odom and you-know-who in another gratuitous sex scene: the scenario recreates Melville Poe's vulgar DELLAMORTE DELLAMORE (CEMETERY MAN).

an orgy scene. "I had a blast doing it, and everyone on the set was very professional," she smiled. "You have to have fun when you're working. I was also a British medieval maiden. The character was really really funny and I got to work with a dialect, which is always more fun when you're going to do a character role. Combining all of the series, I've done about six different characters for them and my hair is always a different color and my personalities are different. I'm like a little chameleon."

Hunter regards her most challenging BUTTERSCOTCH episode to be *Musée Invisible*, where Norman seeks employment—please note the bitter irony—in an institute for the blind. Hunter plays Emma, a blind Braille teacher who uses sex as a learning tool.

"You have to keep your eyes fixated," Hunter explained. "You have to act that you are blind and walk around having a relationship with another actor who is also blind—and you can't risk chicanery by bumping into tables, or dropping books, or some other slapstick schtick that might make that other actor laugh. All the rules that I've had are character rules, they haven't just been beautiful girls who are just sort of love interests. It's all been very challenging. How many opportunities do you get to

be a British medieval maiden and then go into being a blind Braille teacher?"

The writers of both *Manara* series were hardly reluctant to pull the plug on in-jokes. On the contrary: in a segment of *THE CLICK*, one character reports that an invisible man "has been seen [?] in Venice." In the *Missus Invisible* episode of *BUTTERSCOTCH*, the villain tries to dominate the world with a device not unlike the Clicker. "We tried to keep *THE CLICK* and *BUTTERSCOTCH* series separate," said Kanefsky, "but there are some overlapping elements. I have some aphrodisiac chocolate in *BUTTERSCOTCH* [*Last But Not Fowed* episode] that is given to people to basically drive out this spirit. The butler of an old English manor house has recently died, but his spirit won't stop cleaning. Madam Nirvana is asked

to intervene. So, along with Kelli and Norman, she goes to England. She asks the beleaguered household, 'Was he a very proper butler when he died?' and they say, 'Oh yes, he hated when we stayed up past nine o'clock.' So Madama Nirvana gives everyone some aphrodisiac chocolate to start this orgy with the invisible man/thing. The butler's ghost is so offended he leaves the house and never comes back."

In the final episode, *How Sweet It Is*, all the women in the series who have actually had encounters with the invisible man are incarcerated and interrogated by the militant General Marcia Tonk (Delphine Pacific). There's a whole lot o' flashbacks going on as each of Norman's paramours describes her affair.

Hot on the heels of wrapping *BUTTERSCOTCH*, Siritaky's crew shuffled on to the next project, *PASSION AND ROMANCE*, another series of seven films. But the 3-D gimmick has been dropped this time and replaced with a new scheme: each episode is written and directed by women. Not that the boys have been completely reformed. Once the new project is in the can, Siritaky and the gang will collaborate on *THE SEX FILES*, described as "an erotic version of *THE TWILIGHT ZONE*." No kidding. □

Angie Carnel takes off Craig Puck's grade in a confessional, albeit spicy (but to Wee Coover's WEBMASTER ("Be careful what you wish for, you might get it.")



Manata Mesdames GABRIELLA HALL

MODEL SUCCUMBS TO VAMPIRISM, ALIENS, SEX RAYS AND THAT DAMNED INVISIBLE MAN. AND SHE *RESPECTS* MIMES!

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

Abducted by aliens, seduced by an invisible man, afflicted with an insatiable erotic appetite wrought by a sex ray... Gabriella Hall has been busy this past year. Initially launching a career as a successful model, the California native posed among the lush locales of Taiwan, the Philippines, Southeast Asia and Europe. Making the transition to TV commercials, Hall pitched products as varied as Pepsi and Sears. Eventually, she was discontent with limiting her screen exposure to 30-second spots: the proverbial footlights called. Celebrating the '96 New Year by enrolling in acting classes, Hall was promptly hired for a succession of films. But she hasn't completely abandoned her former profession. Hall continues to accept choice modeling assignments.

She debuted on the steamy Cinemax series *EROTIC CONFESSIONS*, but was credited with a "Gabriella Sky" moniker. In the *Boys' Orders* episode, a young lawyer is required to entertain Laura—played by Hall—who's the visiting, sheltered niece of his employer. Predictably, the attorney soon discovers that Laura is a sexual libertine who isn't adverse to throw-

ing caution to the wind. They demolish the boss's office in a wild sexual romp, and experience subsequent "close encounters" both in the lawyer's office and at a party officiated by Laura's uncle. Another episode, *Madelyn's Laundry*, refers to a clothing line designed by Hall's character. "I played a young clothing designer who has been so



Hot, a model & linked-up with both *Manata* mysteries, R. Offended by BUTTERSCOTCH's invisible man.

caught up in her career that she hasn't had a boyfriend," said Hall. "She meets this great guy who brings her out into the world."

Ladd Vance, whose Ministry of Film produces the cable series, absolutely gushes when queried about Hall. "She's supertalented," sighed Vance. "Gabriella has such a natural presence, and she's floating into more mainstream work. We've al-

ready hired her for our other cable series, *INTIMATE SESSIONS*. Gabriella is in the *Mary* episode; we add a *Cyrano de Bergerac* twist to a scenario about massage therapists." Of course, that's another story (where was it?)...

The Cinemax series prompted a plum role for Hall in *CENTERFOLD*, a CFV production which recently televised on Pay Per View. "I play an actress from Chicago who moves to L.A. only to face the hard reality out here," explained Hall. "In desperation, she decides to pose for a magazine layout, but then she ends up not doing it. She gets her series and wins in the end."

Hall found a hot spot as one among an ensemble cast in both of Allan Smitzky's erotic fantasy series: she was assigned three episodes of *THE CLICK* and four episodes of *BUTTERSCOTCH*. Hall appears in three episodes of the latter series as Kelli Parkinson, the invisible man's comely compatriot. Hall also cameoed in episode #5, *Mission Invisible*, as Shynna Patel, an Indian woman living in New Delhi; the character leads the invisible dude to the lair of a fiend who's hungry for world domination.

"Kelli is a great role," said an enthusiastic Hall, "because she's a strong woman who's an actress. She goes to a party where she meets this guy, named Norman, who's invisible. They end up dating and going out and stuff. So the story is her adventures with this invisible guy as they travel around the world. Actually, we didn't really travel; we did that Hollywood magic thing. It was a lot of fun and a lot of special effects."

The actress has several sexual encounters with the transparent Norman, including a funny follicle sequence. "I'm comfortable with nudity," said Hall, "and everything is done with good taste."

Picture this: a professional mime was hired to furnish the young actress with some pointers, specifically how to make mad monkey love to an invisible man. "It was great for me because I got to train with an actual mime," recounted Hall. "I learned to deal with a

leading man who wasn't there! I did just a lot of miming as if I was going to touch his chest or whatever. I had to pretend—and make myself believe—that he was there. It turned out pretty good. And, hey, I believed I was talking to somebody there. We also did a lot of special effects with the pillow. There was a lot of wires and stuff so the pillow would move when he is supposed to lay down on it. We had a machine that blew air on me as if the invisible man was touching my arm or my thigh. It blew a concentrated stream of air which would actually show an imprint as his hand moved up and down my leg. It actually felt pretty good!"

In *Power Flower*, the second in the *BUTTERSCOTCH* canon, Kelli is the center of attention. Armchair tourists will appreciate her transport, to exotic

locales, via flying carpet. And, by the way, her right breast plays host to a homeless genie (beats out that whole *Cyrano de Bergerac/messiahe* thing). Central to the story is the Moroccan location where Kelli lands a job on a movie set. "A genie lingers over there," Hall smiled. "He's this wacky genie who grants wishes. There's one scene where he throws a pie in my face which was pretty crazy. He does it because he's a joker, always pulling tricks out of a bag."

"The flying carpet, of course, was actually on the ground but it was on rollers. I would get on top and, as it was taking off, they would pull the carpet and we did a little love scene while flying over Morocco. They back-projected scenes of this city and landscapes. I think that was a 3-D scene. When doing those shots, you have to be aware of the camera position all the time, any move-

Her sexy presence picked Papp & Sears (2), but fell unloved as a BUTTERSCOTCH bombshell who takes a genie to her SOCCER.



ments you make, like flipping your hair, you make towards the camera."

Hall's pantomime skills were really stretched in a barroom brawl between Norman and Robert Bull. Kelli's pissed-off ex-agent: "Robert Bull becomes invisible—he's the bad invisible guy. We have a fight scene where they're both grabbing me. So I'm doing all the special effects. I get thrown against a door and I really got pulled. Each of the invisible men—Bull, the evil one and Norman, the good one—has one of my hands and they're pulling me from side to side. That was hard, but it worked out really well. It looks like there are two guys there, pushing me around. I worked with the mime on that. I had about two hours of lessons with him."

Upon answering the casting call



Making the transition from still life to sexy films, Hall stresses, "I'm comfortable with nudity. THE CLICK & BUTTERSCOTCH are shot in good taste."

for THE CLICK, Hall was handed scripts for a trilogy of episodes. "I played a girl named Linda in the first one, *The Body Beautiful*," Hall recalled. "Linda and a guy named Ben work in a health spa and they discover this clicker, which has the power to turn people on; it can also transform them into different people. We have this power, and we're going to make this spa more entertaining. It's pretty interesting."

The episode was helmed by Rolfe Kanefsky, who also directed Hall in *Balls of Thunder*. "He's a good director," said Hall. "He believes in rehearsals and he communicates with his actors. He's really sharp and quick, so you've got to be on your toes with him because he'll throw something at you. He also wrote the episode I was in."

In the aforementioned CLICK episode, *Balls of Thunder*, Hall was cast as a henchman for the evil Tangerina, a woman bent on world domination through cloning. "I played a bad girl, which was a change for me," said Hall. "I play Arcola. Tangerina wants the power of the clicker and we're all

trying to get that little device. Between scenes, we would all play with the props. We'd run around pretending to click everybody."

Playboy's cable unit produced WOMEN: STORIES OF PASSION, a Showtime series competing for late night's adult sweeps. Hall was cast in *Motel Magic*, a mystical vignette. To promote the show, Playboy designed a six-page spread that was printed in the December '96 issue. "They called and said they wanted me to be in their magazine," said the actress, "so I did a pictorial for them. It came out nice. We went out to this mansion in Los Angeles, not the Playboy mansion. It was beautiful. I got to shoot with a really great photographer named Arny Freytag, and we did a whole bunch of different setups and they gave me a nice, full page. They have the cameraman, his assistant, makeup man, hair stylist. It wasn't a lot of people, about ten of us in this house. It took all day to do it. We took about five setups. It was a high quality production."

"On my episode of WOMEN, I play a woman in this hotel room. Sally Kirkland portrays a character who's a writer, and she comes to this fantasy hotel to get away from her life. She occupies a room and all she hears is this couple in the next room: she can hear them making love and having a good time. She thinks they're young because they're always making love and when she sees them come out of the room, it turns out they're an old couple. I play the 'young woman' inside

Hall, caught in *The First of The Click*, surrenders into sexual submission: "But my BUTTERSCOTCH character is a strong woman who's a real actress."



GABRIELLA HALL

"Between scenes of CLICK, we'd play with the props. We ran around, pretending to 'click' everyone."

the room. When you go into this room, you become young again and all your fantasies come true."

An alumnus of Royal Oaks' NIGHT SHADE—cast also included Nikki Fritz and FF cover woman Tane McClure (84)—Hall describes the film as "a lot of fun. I got to play a vampire and I got fitted for the tooth. They put me on the box cover of the video. My character goes to work and hangs out at this club at night, where they have exotic dancing. I get my blood by luring men into the back room. This guy comes in and I kind of trick him into going into this room with me. So I do this dance for him and, while I'm dancing, I bite him. That was a supporting role."

The busy actress is routinely cast in erotic thrillers (LOVE ME TWICE, SEXUAL ROULETTE, MASSEUSE II, POWERPLAY) that are edited into R-rated cuts and whisked to your local Blockbuster. Her latest is Surrender Cinema's LOLITA 2000, a vehicle for Full Moon's direct-to-video diva, Jacqueline Lovell. Hall's character is abducted by aliens: "My boyfriend thinks I'm going crazy when these repressed memories, about the marian kidnapping, start coming out. So they take me to a doctor. I learn that I have been impregnated, and I'm deposited into a psycho ward. It turns out that the doctor, whom I trust, is an alien himself. They look human, but I accidentally scratch one of them and you see this green alien beneath. We had some special effects people do all the alien work. I had some very intense scenes, I had to play like I was under hypnosis."

There's some business about martian/human bonding, but Hall wraps up our interview with a "preview" of her pivotal scene: "I'm sitting in my apartment. Suddenly, there's an earthquake and I see this light—and I walk towards it. In the next scene, I'm lying on an examining table where the aliens come and experiment on me. They have some instruments. And, oh, I'm wearing the little nightgown that I had on when I got abducted..." □

Manara Mesdames JACKIE LOVELL

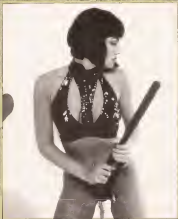
PRIOR TO ASCENT AS THE HORROR CINEMA'S RENASCENT HEROINE (SHE CAN ACT!), LOVELL COOKED IN "THE CLICK."

By DAN SCAPPEROTTI

During the Horror Cinema's Cro-Magnon era—less euphemistically christened “the Slasher trend”—starlets, generically branded as “scream queens,” earned notoriety for triple functions: stripping, screaming and dying. The “celebrity” and subgenre quickly faded...

Flesh forward one decade later (1997), Jacqueline Lovell has been groomed by Pull Moon Studios and Surrender Cinema into the renaissance “horror heroine”: though no stranger to stripping, Lovell is rigidly resistant to screaming and dying. Directed by the likes of Zalman King and Charles Band, Lovell is especially adept with comedy. And she likes it black: sample her tart, pseudo-Tennessee Williams white trash in *HEAD OF THE FAMILY* or her sex queen in *HIDEOUTS*. “I love Jacqueline as an actress, she’s great to work with,” says Surrender producer Pat Scallano, who cast Lovell in *FEMALIEN* and *VIRTUAL ENCOUNTERS*. “Besides her natural, physical attributes, she is a natural born actress.”

But Lovell describes the humor of the Manara mini-series, which she shot more than one year ago, as “perverse.” Directed by Ralf Knefsky, she plays Pussy l’Amour in *Balls of Thunder*, an episode of *THE CLICK* that’s laden with James Bond buffoonery. It seems



Lovell in *CLICK*'s *Balls of Thunder* (l). “Liked the acting exercise, but wish I could have worked with Michele Soavi. She’s great!” R’al uncredited smile

Pussy and Arnold (Gabriella Hall), both benchwomen of the tyrannical Tangerina, are dispatched to kill Red Steele. Wielding the Clicker, Steele (agent 6014) shoots an aphrodisiac beam at his would-be assassins; both women collapse on his hotel bed, squirming in orgasmic delight. But the scene was originally written for a trio of femmes. “All three of us were supposed to make out,” laughs Lovell. “Then the girl I was supposed to make out with didn’t

show up that day. She got in a car accident or something. The other girl (Hall) doesn’t work with women—that’s why, when we got clicked, we take off our clothes and play with ourselves—not each other.”

Lovell suffered an injury when, as a fight ensues in Tangerina’s laboratory, she was tossed into a cloning chamber. “Tangerina was supposed to be making duplicates of Arnold Schwar-



zenegger,” says Lovell. “But, since I had been thrown in, the resultant creation is ‘Super Pussy,’ which is a muscular hybrid of myself and Arnold. In rehearsal, there was padding in the ‘cloning’ box that I’m thrown into. But, once shooting started, they took the padding out and put a smoke machine in there. I was thrown-in backwards, couldn’t see where I was going, and landed on the smoke machine. I got this big scar on my ass and I was



Lovell and Taylor St. Clair as *CLICK*'s *Body Beautiful*. "I don't like working with men," says Lovell, who describes the series as "definitely a learning experience. But I prefer black humor over nudity, postball stuff."

bleeding all over the place. I had to be rushed to the hospital to get a tetanus shot. I wasn't very happy at all.

"In the subsequent scene, I'm talking to Tangerina. It looks like I'm in a bad mood, and that's because I was hurt and just got back from the hospital. They offered to pay for a plastic surgeon to fix it, but it would have taken months of stitches and it's already shrunk down to only this little scar. Now, I thought that whole situation was really fucked up. I mean—come on!—we're working on a set with naked people, and they don't even protect us. They took out the padding?!! I just thought it was unprofessional. The doors weren't sandced either, so I was getting splinters on my legs."

Working with a certain supporting player proved equally problematic. It seems that Tangerina utilizes her snake as an exotic "torture/disposal" unit: female prey are cruelly disciplined with excessive organics. "I mess up on one of my little missions," purrs Lovell, "and Tangerina decides to punish me with her pet snake, Stretch."

"I'm tied to a vortically-undined table and the snake is supposed to slither up my leg. But Stretch wouldn't climb up my dress because it was such a little, confined area. Then they had to lay the table flat so he only had to slither across the table. But then the snake's tongue was licking at my underwear, and I started freakin' out. I didn't know if he would bite. It was very weird. Relfe Knefsky thought it was hilarious

that the snake was licking my panties, but I was like, 'What the hell am I doing here?'"

Lovell, who appears in four of the seven *CLICK* features, also plays Laurie Hunt in the *Sexual Dependence* Day episode. "I'm a news reporter," she explains. "There's this corrupt lobbyist who has gotten hold of the clicker. If anyone disagrees with him, he clicks them and has them do whatever he wants. I report on it, so he gets mad and clicks me all over the place."

A desperate Hunt deceives her tormentor into believing his sensuous attraction is mutual; but, after making love to the Congressman on a train, she's soon back in the studio. "I say all this horrible stuff about him again," sniffs Lovell. "He gets mad and clicks me over the air and then, suddenly, I'm making out with this anchor woman and then that's the end of me."

In *The Erotic Curse of Cairo*, a mummy's libido is rekindled by clicker. Lovell appears as Victoria, a Manhattan lawyer. "This time, I get to control

JACKIE LOVELL

"I got a big scar on my ass! There's a set with naked people and they took out the padding? C'mon!!"

the clicker box," says Lovell. "I'm working for this law firm and my client's been had it. When he clicks me, we have sex. And then he dies. This other chick steals the clicker, but then I find her and get it. I tie her up, and then I just want to play sex games with this guy. I have him put on this pony mask, and I'm sitting on top of him riding him around this room. I'm torturing the chick because she's chained to the wall and can't play."

Later, Dr. Fee—the series' linking character—"clicks me and this girl," relates Lovell, "and she and I end up having this love scene among all this 'popcorn'—you know, that white fluffy stuff that they use for packing."

A health spa is the target of a very unfriendly takeover in *The Body Beautiful* episode. "My character, Susan is pretty boring in this episode," admits Lovell. "She doesn't have much to do. I break in a spa with these two people to trash the equipment, but the owners of the spa find out about it and they click us. We start making out with the equipment, and each other, and we get arrested. I'm only in about four scenes."

So why is Lovell perpetually cast in woman-woman scenes? "I don't like working with men," Lovell candidly shrugs. "So in the first script, where I was supposed to have three boy-girl love scenes, they changed two of the characters to women to make me happy. That was pretty nice."

Upon wrapping *THE CLICK*, Lovell retired her "sex kitten" image: "I'm sick and tired of doing movies where they just want a bunch of love scenes. It's just kind of getting old, and I feel I've done my share. I don't have to be in a movie where there's a sex scene every 15 minutes. I'm turning down those roles. See, I don't want to go back down the ladder. I want to go up." Her tentative, late '97 projects include a *HEAD OF THE FAMILY* sequel and an Edgar Allan Poe movie. □

Sexual Dependence Day: Knefsky's news anchor is anchored by Lovell's orgasmic dancer. "I make out with the anchor woman & that's the end of me!"



Manara Mesdames LESLIE OLIVAN

ON-SCREEN, SHE'S A BOMBSHELL ADRIFT IN A ZOMBIE PIC.
OFF-SCREEN, THIS UCLA GRAD IS TRULY A 'NATURE GIRL.'

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

Starlets. Squeezing into bikinis, they're baptized into the biz by sauntering on sand for a syndicated series or being similarly decorative among the extras for a soap. Not Leslie Olivan. As a member of producer Alain Sirtitsky's unofficial stock company, she trades quips with an amorous invisible man, and has to negotiate a chronic case of nymphomania dispensed by a



► Olivan, slicked by Jon Deas, *is in the heat of the Cheet*; she cobbles every Gabriella Hall (off-camera). "My character has a fascination with goats."

handy-dandy M invention.

Born in Lafayette, a small San Francisco suburb, Olivan moved to Los Angeles in pursuit of a UCLA degree in English literature. A veteran of high school and junior college plays, Olivan honed her dramatic aptitude with roles as Shakespearean characters and, between studies, performing improv comedy at the university.

When a leg injury prompted her absence from college for an entire semester, Olivan turned her attention to her other interest. "I wanted to get out there and do some serious acting."





Olivia as Willemena Van Krupps (l), Hsu agent, and Shen Hsueh in *Butterscotch* over Berlin. "I took a semester off and I really missed acting," says Olivia but she passed on another series to attend school.

Recommended to a casting director by a friend, Olivia nailed a nondescript "bar babe" role in the *For Love of Click* episode of *THE CLICK*. "I walk up and have a drink at the bar. Some guy gets clicked and makes a move on me. I was clicked just for a second, and I kind of let him have his way for a moment until I realize what is going on. Then I smack him and I walk off."

Olivia followed her inauspicious screen debut with another episode of Alain Siritzky's erotic series: "I played Alsatia in *In the Heat of the Click*. She's sort of a loud woman, a free-spirited character who had no qualms about getting in fights, and doing whatever it took to get what she wanted. While Alsatia and her best friend, Julia, are in pursuit of a mystical ancient necklace, the click remote is dropped into her limousine. We use it to track down this necklace and ward off people who are trying to capture us." Julia, played by Gabriella Hall, can't experience orgasm and has been told that the mysterious necklace will offer her an unprecedented sexual latitude. The duo finally track down the clicker, though both are ignorant of its operation. "It's a big trial and error thing for us," laughed Olivia. "There's a button that you press and it actually takes us some time to figure out how to use it. My character uses it first, and I changed Julia into a Sumo wrestler and a bodybuilder. Alsatia has a fascination with ghosts, and she's trying

to figure out a way to change people into goats and, inadvertently, I make people get horny."

One downer: Pick-up shots were filmed by a second unit. While the action takes place in New York and Vienna, Olivia—denied the perk of travel—never left the confines of the studio.

Rolf Kanefsky, one of *CLICK*'s directors, was casting the *Lost Bat Found* episode of another Siritzky series, *BUTTERSCOTCH*. He pitched

Olivia in the *BUTTERSCOTCH* episode, *Lost Bat Found*. She plays an Italian star whose orgasmic performance in a "living dead" pageant is honored by an invisible man.



Olivia for the role of Claudia, an over-the-top Italian bombshell who mugs through a zombie movie that winks at similar sex-horror confections whipped up by Lucio Fulci and Lamberto Bava. An Italian film crew is shooting the graveyard scene of *AFTER LIFE* and Olivia is supposed to make love to her dead lover.

"My character, caught up in the movie deal thing, is shooting the graveyard scene of a movie called *AFTER LIFE*," said Olivia. "Claudia, in the movie-within-a-movie, is bidding adieu to her dead lover when he awakens out of nowhere. They proceed to greet each other with amorous embraces. The director decides that our scene is not believable and that I must make love to the wind. That's when the series' central character, Norman the invisible man, steps in." Claudia makes love to the transparent Don Juan but the crew, oblivious to his presence, credits the all-too-creditable performance to the hammy ingenue. "From that point on, the director is just so impressed. This whole wind thing just tantalizes him into thinking this is an Oscar-winning, forest-saving event. The cinematography was actually done really well for the graveyard scene."

By the time both Manara/Siritzky series wrapped production, Olivia tallied a total of five roles and a profusion of love scenes: "I got a lot of experience with different accents and different characters. It was a lot of fun. My first love scene was in episode C as Alsatia. Brian Rudnick, the director, was actually very, very nice. He let us do everything in a more cumpy, hilarious way. Instead of doing one of my love scenes with a custom person, I got to do a very funny dance and then I got to beat the guy up and leave him there. The director let us keep things funny instead of doing just noddie, naked stuff. At one point, I was supposed to have a love scene with Gabriella but we just kiss each other and undress each other a little bit and then just fall on the floor out of sight of the camera. It was a lot funnier than if we'd had a full-blown love scene."

A novice at the sensual rigors of filmmaking, Olivia offered succinct counsel to her on-screen lovers: "I just told the actor, 'Touch and die.' When you do a love scene with a girl, it's easier because you know that you're both there for the same reason and it goes much smoother. Some guys are actually easy to do love scenes with, but sometimes guys try to make little 'scorey' moves in there. But girls are pretty

LESLIE OLIVAN

"A love scene with another girl is easier because you know you're both there for the same reason."

cool. I've had a couple of love scenes with guys, and they're total gentlemen about it so it was very easy. I don't get myself all worked up. I just go in and have fun with it. I enjoy a love scene that's very campy and very funny."

One of BUTTERSCOTCH's prerequisites—and presumably not included on Lee Strasberg's academia—was making love to an invisible Romeo. "Oh, we go to invisible man class," Olivan smiled. "I saw some tapes of other people doing similar things in other movies, and we had a mime help us a little bit. It's kind of bizarre, but it works once you get the hang of it."

Olivan had the opportunity to chew some scenery, à la IL-SA, as a Nazi agent in the Bittersostok Over Berlin episode: "I play this Wilhemena Von Kruppe character. It was a whole day of work. She's the bad girl trying to get the Tiara of Templar. I had the most fun filming that day. The director, Scott Kennedy, is hilarious." As a child, Olivan brayed eccentric laughter that used to scare her sister. During production of BUTTERSCOTCH, "I did 'the laugh' once, as a joke, when the camera wasn't rolling. Scott really liked it. So every time I kill or hurt someone, he had me do that laugh. It ended up being cut into the movie."

Between cable gigs, Olivan was directed by Ed Holzman in DAMIEN'S SEED, a horror movie shot at Big Bear Lake. "I play Diane, an evil character—the bad girl—who is possessed by a witch. Diane and her best friend, Connie, kidnap this police guy because we believe he's Damien's son. We kidnap somebody else just to lure him in to our our web. The highlight of the ten-day shoot was the fiery finale. "We had an amazing bonfire out in the wilderness."

Naturally, t&a was obligatory: "I have a threesome with two girls, and then we did a threesome with the police character and my friend. We anoint him with oils and try to seduce him at the end."

Shortly before we spoke, Olivan completed a Playboy video titled TWINS AND SISTERS, TOO. "I did it with my half sister, Karen Caradonna



Olivan, photographed by Jan Ouse, enjoys "love scenes that are very campy and very funny. My first love scene was in a CLUTCH episode. The director was very, very cool. He let us keep things funny instead of the usual, naked stuff."



BUTTER Saccharinella: fluffy producers continue another liaison between a starlet (Olivia) & a non-existent actor (invisible man). Can you spell I-o-w-h-a-d-g-e-t?

They featured six or seven different sets of twins and sisters and we—"

Abruptly, a baby crow that Olivia had rescued literally took a flying leap and relieved itself on her dresser. Whoops.

She digresses to Sirtzky's latest project, a TV series titled *PASSION AND ROMANCE*: "I'm cast in an episode called *Windows of the Heart*, which is directed by Brenda MacIntyre. I play a stewardess/dominatrix. It takes a lot of sensitivity for a man or woman to direct a love scene. Some actors really dig love scenes and are into it, others get a little sensitive. Most of the directors I've worked with have been really great, but Brenda was amazing. I think you can have a great or awful time in a love scene, whether the director is a man or a woman.

"I almost had to forfeit that job because of school but then, at the last minute, they pulled me back on. My character was pretty funny. For some reason, I seem to get cast in roles where I beat up a lot of people."

Drama is only one of Olivia's twin vocations: the other is a career encompassing her compassion for animals. A UCLA graduate with a degree in English literature, Olivia is transfer-

ring to a veterinary school: "It's always been acting and animals for me, and I've always been pursuing both. I just figure that once I'm a veterinarian, I can do acting just about anywhere I want. I'm a straight A student in all my pro-vet classes."

Fortunately, Olivia isn't confined to a small apartment; on the contrary, her residence is a house with enough room to serve as a sanctuary for homeless animals. "I have an aviary in my backyard because, every baby season, I shelter young animals," she explained, "and then I let them go when they're strong enough to be on their own. This season, I've been finding a lot." Referring to the defecating crow, she notes "it was so weak yesterday, that he

couldn't even hold onto my finger when it perched. Today it is perching really tight.

"I have 15 animals right now because it's baby season. I've rescued the crow, a wild rat, and two sparrows. I have five dogs, five birds, a turtle and a tarantula. I always wanted a spider."

Spiders? Unless you haven't already noticed, Olivia isn't exactly a generic Hollywood starlet. She doesn't sit by the phone all day and prefers a more personalized "web" to trendy technology. "I'm a very hyper person. When you put tarantulas on your body, they relate to the world through the fur on their backs. So when they walk on you, you have to be very calm and not breathe on them because they'll dart

and they'll scatter. This tarantula will walk between your legs, and spin a web between your knees and stuff. It's very cool and very soothing. The way that they walk is very graceful. It's just amazing.

"I spend a lot of time working in a wildlife way station where we rehabilitate all kinds of wild and exotic animals. We have tigers, bears, lions, possums, foxes, crows, ravens, everything. It's one of the few in the nation of its kind."

Guybrush Rules, as director of a monster mash, tries to coax an Oscar-winning performance from a fire-dive (Olivia) in *BUTTERBEGOTCH's* *Last But Not Least*.



Milo Manara's LE DECLIC

TEN YEARS AGO, THE SEX/SCI-FI HYBRID WAS PITCHED AS A MOVIE
THE PROBLEM: WHO WOULD PLAY THE SPICY SCHIZO?

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

Wrapping the fifth film of his EMMANUELLE movie series, producer Alain Sirtzky was prepping for another franchise. During the late 80s, he purchased the rights to Milo Manara's best-selling graphic novel, *The Clicks*; the title refers to a beam-shooting game which "clicks" its practitioners—an unwary victims—into sexual seizures.

Jean-Louis Richard, who penned the screenplay for the initial EMMANUELLE movie, wrote and directed *LE DECLIC*, the film adaptation of Manara's erotica. Suspecting the novel's Northern Italian setting wouldn't communicate a continental flavor, the producer opted for New Orleans' steamy south lands. "New Orleans is the type of place where these type of characters could have existed," said Sirtzky. "It's the kind of place where you have old fashioned, uptight people and, at the same time, you have the host that could drive people crazy once in a while."

"In the film, you see that this Madame Christiani character is a female Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. She has two personalities and she moves from one, to the other, almost without noticing...except, of course, for



Producer Alain Sirtzky poses with "Clicker" Florence Guerin, who played the sexually schizophrenic Madame in *LE DECLIC* (THE TURN-ON). Photographer Otto Wessner spotted Guerin with Roman Polanski when she was 16; Otto said she'd be fantastic for the part.

the box that triggers this change of personality. I think that the climate and the ambience of New Orleans worked perfectly well for the film."

The story: Mr. Christiani, one of the richest men in New Orleans, has a problem: Claudia, his gorgeous wife, is frigid. When one of his crooked schemes may implicate him with a jail sentence, Christiani bribes Dr. Fez to take the fall. Though he amasses a small fortune, Fez hates his benefactor and is determined to seduce Claudia just to humiliate her husband. Stealing another scientist's invention, a black box that has rendered rats into sexual predators,

Fox makes some modifications. Naturally, the "Clicker" upgrades Claudia's sexual appetite hunger to insatiable.

Not unlike his talent search for the perfect Emmanuelle, Sirtzky campaigned for an actress who could externalize Claudia's psyche. But the initial results were discouraging. "How we found Florence Guerin, whom we cast as Claudia, is quite funny," said Sirtzky. "We were looking all over the world for the lead actress for this part. Of course, we needed someone who would be very good as an uptight woman but also capable of really becoming wild in the sex scenes." Fi-

nally, famed Swiss photographer Otto Wessner, whose spreads appeared in *Playboy* and other international publications, made a suggestion. "Otto's a very good friend of Roman Polanski," the producer noted. "He remembered that he saw a girl named Florence Guerin with Roman several years earlier, when she was 16 years old. He said she would be fantastic for that part."

Time passed. Sirtzky, bag in hand and bound for New Orleans, was en route to the airport when Wessner burst into his office: he had found Guerin! The actress had already appeared, bereft of clothes, in the likes of *BIZARRE* and *BLACK VE-NUS*; and she was scheduled to sign for another film. "Otto told me that her apartment was on the way to the airport," said Sirtzky. "I said, 'That's okay, but I won't have time to go up and see her. I want her to come down in the street, and that's where I want to meet her because I won't waste any time.' So she comes down wearing the thing she sleeps in, a night dress. I had a Cadillac at that time. She came with her book, and showed me her book on the hood of the car. I liked her very much and said, 'If you

continued on page 68

FATALE ATTRACTIONS

continued from page 8

title villain and Sean Connery's Bond. TOMORROW NEVER DIES is represented by doll duplications of Wai Lin, Elliot Carver and Pierce Brosnan's secret agent. Most of the dolls measure 9" tall and are fully articulated. Suggest that you seriously haul butt to purchase these collectibles! Exclusive's limited editions of Laurel and Hardy and GILLIGAN'S ISLAND sold out in less than two weeks after they debuted on the local Target chain's toy shelves.

● Amy Lynn Baxter—starlet (BIKINI BUSTED, BEAUTY ACADEMY), frequent Howard Stern guest & Playboy model (Worms of Radio)—is shooting a series for the Showtime cable network. It's likely that she'll also land a sensuous role in the Twilight Production, EDGAR ALLAN POE'S MASQUE: the movie will be shot in Baltimore, the site of Poe's tomb.

● Icon Entertainment has no choice but to compromise KILLERS for censors. Director David LaTi describes the film as "a thriller about an average girl, played

by Kim Little, and what it would take to push her into killing another human being. We slowly strip away all the things that she depended on—her boyfriend, her money, companionship—so that by the end of the film, she's become a savage beast who is capable of killing." But the film's release has been handicapped, notes producer David Itkinawi, "by the MPAA and various censorship boards worldwide that have gauged the film as too violent, however, if you take it to the fans, they'll say it's not violent enough." I've seen the film myself, and thought the carnage was hardly unerring. Of course, an independent film can't afford to buy MPAA approval (check out the extravagant blood-spewing and limb-chewing in the \$100 million STARSHIP TROOPERS).

● Though she declined to reprise the title character in Surrender Cinema's FEMALIEN sequel, Venessa Taylor is likely to surface as another

character. "Nothing has been confirmed yet," notes Taylor. "It might be just a cameo role or I might be throughout the whole movie. Whatever it is, I would not be doing the nudily like I did in the first one, which merged science fiction with sexuality. It won't be as crazy. Everything's still very up in the air, but I'll keep you posted."

● Call it a force of habit! From the twisted mind of Antarctic Press' Ben Dunn comes Warrior Nun Areala, a sword-wielding, cleavage-heaving clergy chick on an avenging mission from Mr. Big, Himself! Says comic writer/company spokesperson Steven Ross, "In the comic book, the Vatican has a division of female nun fighters who are trained as ninjas for the purpose of fighting demonic forces. There is also a division of male Magic Priests. In the same way that religion has traditionally viewed women, the warrior nuns are second class citizens compared to the priests, so there's a little power struggle going on. Areala lost her hand in a fight with a demon, so she has a cybernetic hand. She also has a rosary with exploding heads!" Dunn's other comic heroine, Shotgun Mary, was formerly a warrior nun but she abandoned the order (it's hinted that she just couldn't back the obligatory "celibacy" regimen), nevertheless, Mary—who maintains a large network of friends in the church—rides around on a big ole' Harley, fighting off those darned demons.

Dunn also publishes Ross' Clepsy Sanchez comic book, illustrated by Scott Michaud. "The title character is modeled after Mexican actress Patricia Manterola," says Ross. "Manterola is sort of like Salma Hayek, coming from Mexico and trying to break into American movies. She's doing a movie now called PARTNERS with Tyrone Power, Jr. and Clark Gable, Jr." Sanchez, a former wrestler, is hired by a food company as their surrogate Ronald McDonald. Her promotional work for the company is videotaped by "jealous sidekick" Pedro, who wears a sombrero and plays in a mariachi band. "The comic book plays on stereotypes of Mexicans," says Ross. "My mother is Mexican, so I've grown up with all these Mexican traditions over the

Amy Lynn Baxter, a cable queen (EYEBURN, VENGEANCE, LORD OF THE CITY) next in sexy roles (Pier waist shot), fantasy sex/L. states on her own Showtime series. Her next film? Maybe E.A. POE'S MASQUE.



years. It's very satirical, with lots of action."

●Director Philip Cable is currently helming a 45-minute film called **THE KNIGHTS OF JUSTICE**, based upon the Big Bang comic book of the same name. Teased as a TV pilot, **KNIGHTS** "is essentially like the Justice League of America, but with all of Big Bang's comic book characters," says Cable. "We focus-in on four of them: Thunder Girl, The Knight Watchman, Ultimian and Masker." Cable describes the latter character as "the group's wise guy. She's inspired by great '40s and '50s comic book characters like The Black Cat and Red Woman."

●Joseph Laudati, who's sculpted "fantasy film femmes" (Tiffany Shoppa, Maxon Kelley, Lorian McCosm) into model kits, has crafted an Elvira statuette for Screenman Productions, the pre-painted figurine, which requires no assembly, debuted in hobby shops last Halloween. "Female figure kits continue to be a strong market, and they're a key focus of my work," says Laudati. "There's talk of a new Bettie Page figure, and the Elvira because will probably result in an entire line of B-movie, theme-based kits. I've been approached about doing licensed figures of Ginger Lynn Allen and Tracy Lords. Time will tell if the trend will last. Until then, I continue my role as Pygmalion, looking to sculpt the perfect Galatea." □

MILO MANARA

mentioned from page 34
the **EMMANUELLE** films, recently titled **THE CLICK**. The scenario originated in spring, 1982 when Luciano Oppe, editor of an Italian **Playboy** surrogate called *Playmen*, was introduced to Manara. Oppe invited the artist to furnish the magazine with a sensuous comic strip. Though en route to India, Manara accepted the job: he later dispatched his preliminary designs back to Oppe.

The resultant story—a beautiful heroine controlled by the depraved Dr. Fox via a biometric stimulator—appeared in *Playmen's* January '83 edition as *Un guinea* (A Guinea). During the same year, Manara's comic strip was printed in the French *L'Espresso* de Sa-

sones as *Le Declic* (The Click). Two years later, Nuova Frontiera Editions combined all of Manara's strips in a book titled *Il Gioco* (The Game), which tallied a European sale of 500,000 copies.

The book found its legion of fans in France; among its admirers was screenwriter/director Jean-Louis Richard, who adapted *Le Declic* into a 1989 movie. The film, assistant-directed by Bob Rafelson, was shot in the United States. Manara supervised the production and contributed to the script's re-write, nevertheless, he heeded about promptive censorship of an erotic adult scene that Manara insisted could have provoked the same profitable controversy as **LAST TANGO IN PARIS** better sequence.

The artist's latest graphic novel, *Guercino*, is a retread of Jonathan Swift's classic but with a gender-bending twist. Released overseas in 1996, the book arrived in America one year later from NBM Publishing. □

LE DECLIC

mentioned from page 34
want, you're hired on the spot. But you don't have time to go up to your apartment, you have to come with me to the airport because I don't want to lose my flight. So, in the car, I called her agent and we made a deal. A week later, she came to New Orleans."

Manara, serving as the film's set designer, was on location during the New Orleans shoot. The artist devoted a profuse amount of time sketching pictures of Guerin. The last shot of the movie finds her in the sexually liberated Claudia rushing toward the camera, the image of Guerin dissolves into one of Manara's comic book panels. "He made a lot of drawings with her," said Birtlesky, "and the drawings are really quite fantastic. You can see that Florence is one of Manara's characters."

LE DECLIC was released in France during 1989. Roger Corman's New Horizons company debuted the film domestically as **THE TURN-ON**. Determined to spice-up the action, Corman hired Steve Barnett to direct additional tala scenes with starlets Tami Naples, Debra Lamb and Maria Ford (the latter performed her trademark striptease). □

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LETTERS

MAYBE WHERE THE BOYS ARE?

Where in the world are female journalists who have some kind of linkage with science fiction, fantasy and horror films? I suspect all of them (all 6 or 60 are working for *Femme Fatales*). Don't get me wrong, I think the guys who write for *FF* should be credited for their insightful interviews. But, as a woman, I like a woman's slant applied to genres that are as male-territorial. So I dig *FF*'s female staffers. I love Amelia Kinkadee's acerbic humor and Jennifer Huse's equally wicked wit. Laura Schiff is prolific, unpretentious and can discuss everything—science, sex, sitcoms—without sounding like tabloid crap. She's a gem. I love Vivian Schilling's informality and sparkle—she stylistically reminds me of James Michener, also adored her *Sacred Fire* novel. And, finally, Julie Strain is just about as subtle as a shotgun—she could seriously shake-up L.A.'s Boy's Club. That's a gal I'd love to swing down a couple of cold ones with.

Is there such a thing as a female-driven magazine devoted to horror/sf/fiction?

Jerry Gray
Bryan, Texas

[Laura Schiff advises you "to sample *Wet Bones*, which is edited and published by Paula Guran. Primarily dedicated to 'dark fiction,' a recent issue of the magazine included an interview with Nancy Collins (*Sunglasses After Dark*). And check-out *Dark Bozo*, an online weekly newsletter also edited by Ms. Guran: a recent edition reviewed *Toscanarise*. *Dark*'s new sci-fi novel, *My Soul To Keep*, which Guran predicts will be a hot Hollywood property "if there's any interviewer at all left on the left coast." Ms. Due, an African-American, earned a *Bruce Stoker Award* nomination for her debut horror novel, *The Between*." So tap-in to the *Wet Bones* web at <http://www.darkcoho.com/wetbones> and *The Dark Echo* at <http://www.annimag.com/darkecho>. For further info on *Toscanarise* Due, type <http://www.darkcoho.com/toscanarise>]

FF WANTS YOU

...I'd like to see an issue that's partially devoted to the females of broadcast news. My personal faves include UPN's Tawny Taylor, Socha Fox, Tammy Taylor, Anne Shattila...OCN's Leslie Haydon, Mia Hee, Christina Carrera, Pamela Tam. KTLA's Jennifer York, Barbara Beck, Sharon Tay, ABC's Elizabeth Vargas...
Arona Rostants
Susan Juan Capistrano, CA

Graduating from *DEATH SPA*, she was a regular on the CBS series *AMERICAN GOTHIC* (1995-96), and she made the transition from the Crypt Keeper's *DEMON KNIGHT* to last summer's sleeper, *L.A. CONFIDENTIAL* (she was cast as Lana Turner)...Unless you're already preparing a profile on this actress, may I register my vote for a Brenda Bakke interview?

R.G. Foley
foleyr@ca.netcom.com

How about a profile on Ami Dolenz (TICKS, MIRACLE BEACH, WITCHBOARD 2, etc)? And, please, update your interviews with Venesa Talar (5/97), SLIDERS! Kara Walker (5/98), the breath-takingly gorgeous Sherry Rappaport (5/12), La Femme Tera Wilson (6/98), Melinda Clarke (6/98) and Ross McGowan (6/98).

Barry Johnson
gonkarr@tdslink.net

FF #66 was ripe with role models—loved the dialogue with STORMSHIP TROOPERS! Dina Meyer, XENA's Hudson Leick and Cameron Diaz. Keep 'em coming...

Sue Belfe
Aglansky, England

Saved your issue (6/6) cover story on STORMSHIP TROOPER Dina Meyer, my grandson's Sigourney Weaver. When can we expect an update?

Alexis Hayes
New York, NY

(Turn to page 10.)

Heard a rumor that Jamie Lee Curtis will be back in a HALLOWEEN sequel, even though



Ulrich Quigley (6) & Ami Dolenz performed special scenes for PUMPKINHEAD II available only in a CD game spin-off

the plot of HALLOWEEN 6 included to the death of her character. Any truth to this?

Peter Burns
Keedyville, Maryland

[Tip: See next issue.]

CD SURENS

Ever since I read your 4-T error story (*The Sirens of CD-ROM*), I've been collecting CD games that are buttressed with the presence of female horror/fantasy icons. Heard rumors that Linnea Quigley (4-2) and Michelle Bauer (4-8) were cast in games adapted from their movies *Truth or Dare?*

Joe Meredith
Jefferson, Ohio

[A little bit of both. Bauer's photos have been slipped into cheesecake pagentry like *Elite Models* 2. This is not a game, only a digitized scrapbook. Bauer deserves better. Quigley performed a cameo in *PUMPKINHEAD II BLOOD WINGS* (1994). An interactive CD, loaded with "additional footage from the movie, shot exclusively for the game," was marketed as *Bloodwings: Pumpkinhead's Revenge*. Originally retailing for \$40, the game was critically panned. Collectors can locate *Bloodwings* in discount bins; price has been reduced to \$29.95.]

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